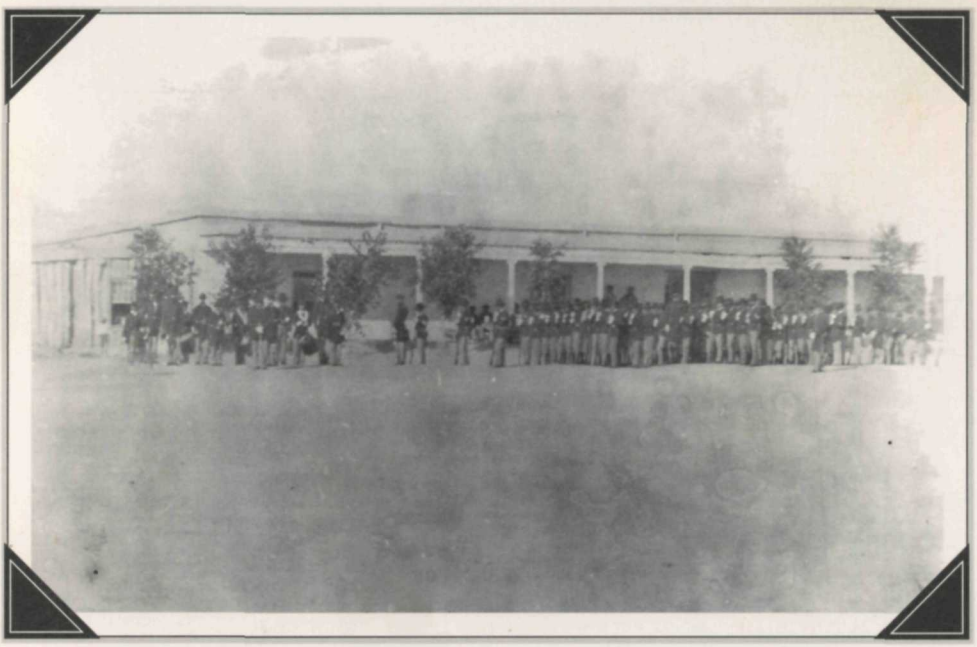
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

FORT CRAIG

The United States Fort on the Camino Real



Collected Papers of the First Fort Craig Conference

FORT CRAIG

The United States Fort on the Camino Real



EDITED BY

Charles Carroll & Lynne Sebastian

2000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Buffalo soldiers from 125th Infantry, 1866
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PREFACE

Charles Carroll



In 1989 the New Mexico Historical Society met in Socorro, New Mexico, and one of the scheduled field trips was a guided tour of Fort Craig. I was the "guide," but ended up receiving the tour of a lifetime. When we arrived at the site, Drs. Myra Ellen Jenkins, Darlis Miller, Lynne Sebastian, John Wilson, and numerous other experts on New Mexico history moved about the fort in groups, sharing avid discussions and recollections of their individual studies of the fort and its era. I was struck by two things: the extraordinary depth of knowledge of so many of the participants, and the obvious pleasure they took in the rare opportunity to think and talk about it with their friends and colleagues. Watching and listening to these scholars, I found myself wishing I could tape their conversations for others to learn from and enjoy. Information about the fort and the frontier era of central New Mexico is generally scattered and difficult for the public to acquire without some degree of research.

When I described that day to Harlan Smith, then manager of the Bureau of Land Management's Socorro Area Office, I asked what he thought of the idea of giving these expert historians a forum again in Socorro, this time with the express purpose of compiling their knowledge in a book to provide the depth of information that so many of our visitors to Fort Craig had asked for. Harlan's response was instant and enthusiastic, as was that of Jim Fox, then our Las Cruces District Manager, and Larry Woodward, then New Mexico State Director. As a result, we began planning the First Fort Craig Conference to coincide with the anniversary of the Battle of Valverde, in February 1990. Approximately 150 people attended, and Barbara Gutierrez and Lois Bell of the Socorro BLM, and Marilyn Pitzenberger, then with the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce, were instrumental in making the conference a logistical success.

The goal of the conference was to produce this book, so there was no general "call for papers," but each of the primary authors was invited to present a paper on topics ranging chronologically from its establishment after the Mexican War, through the late Apache Wars, to its eventual decommissioning. The result was better than we could have imagined. The papers in this volume represent years of research by the individual authors, and in some cases, strong and passionate ideas that remain over a century after the events of the Civil War and the Indian Wars that gave Fort Craig such an important place in U.S. history. Each of the authors attended the conference with the knowledge that their work would eventually become a part of this volume and a permanent contribution to the

scarce body of literature about central New Mexico. We thank each of the authors for their generosity. We miss Dr. Myra Ellen Jenkins, who was with us then and was a mentor to many of us, as well as Jacqueline Meketa, who felt so strongly about the importance of honoring the contributions of Hispanic New Mexicans to the history of territorial New Mexico.

It has now been ten years since the conference, and after many attempts in the ensuing years of extremely tight budgets, we are pleased that through the efforts of Tom Gow, who carried this cause through the budget process, and under the leadership of Kate Padilla, Socorro Field Office Manager, and Michelle Chavez, New Mexico State Director, we have finally been able to allocate the funding to make the publication of this volume possible.

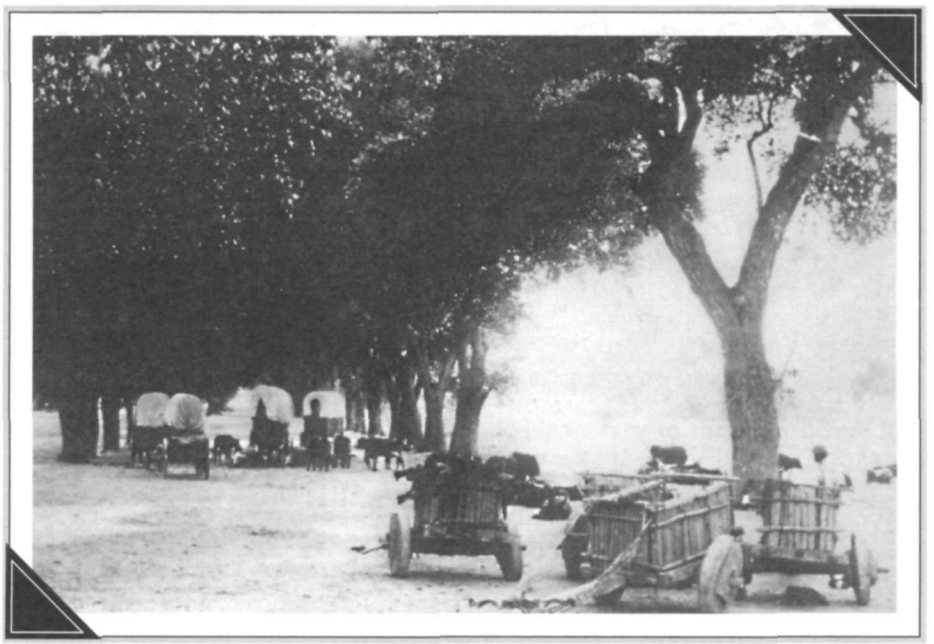
I am extremely grateful to Lynne Sebastian, who took time from an extremely demanding schedule to co-edit the volume. As we drew close to publication, Peggy Gerow, June-el Piper, and Donna Carpio did a superb job of researching and choosing the accompanying graphics and providing layout and design to make this beautifully produced book. We are grateful to all who worked on the project. •



Ruins of commanding officers' quarters, 1990
(photo Ann Jeffrey)

PART ONE

Westward Expansion



Guadalupe Street, Chihuahua City ca. 1883
(photo W. H. Jackson, Museum of New Mexico neg# 54088)

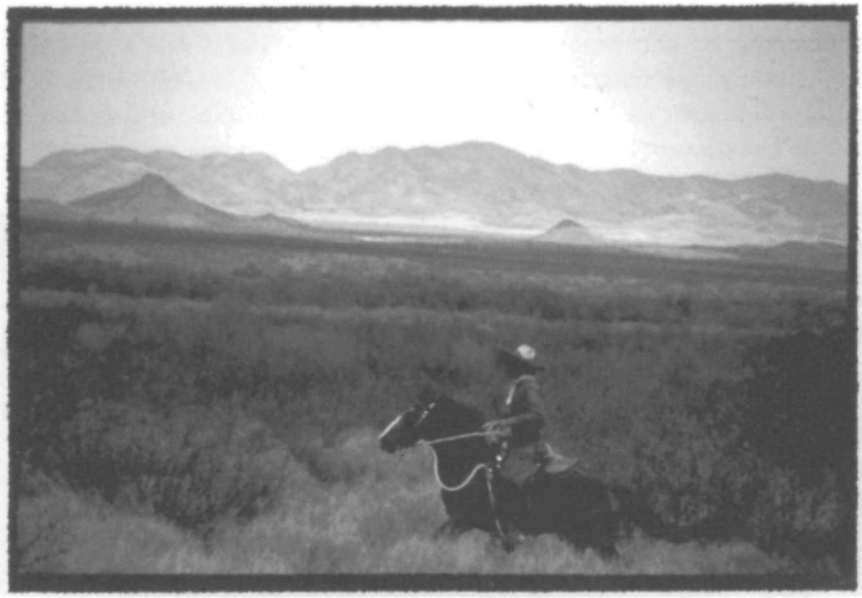


Figure 1.1
Valverde near Mesa del Contadero
(photo Christine Preston)

CHAPTER 1

Charles Carroll

Before Fort Craig

THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE FORT ON THE CAMINO REAL



For modern travelers passing north and south on Interstate 25 between El Paso, Texas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, the steep-sided Mesa Contradero, east of the Rio Grande at San Marcial, may not be noticed at all or may receive just a passing glance as a minor change of scenery. The sharp-edged, black basalt rim and talus of the mesa form a massive feature that stands out in contrast to the rounded brown hills on each horizon and the narrow, green river valley that the modern highway traces through most of the four-hour trip. To earlier travelers, however, the mesa and surrounding landscape signaled a major event in a difficult and dangerous journey that took weeks or even months to complete.

The Journey of Death

From the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, the Camino Real (Royal Road) and later the Santa Fe–Chihuahua Trail passed immediately at the foot of Mesa Contadero, where the black volcanic rocks fallen from the mesa rim pushed the Rio Grande into a bow to the west, before it continued its flow to the south.

Just south of the mesa, the Rio Grande begins a vast curve, slightly to the west and then to the east, around the base of the distant Caballo Mountains. In this region the high gravel ridges and deeply cut arroyos of the river banks made travel impossible for the two-wheeled *carretas* of the Spanish explorers and settlers. As a result, travelers were forced to leave the security of the river waters for a ninety-mile journey across open desert, skirting east of the Caballo and Fra Cristóbal mountains, beginning at a point north of present-day Las Cruces near the village of Rincón and cutting straight across the desert to rejoin the river just south of Mesa Contadero.

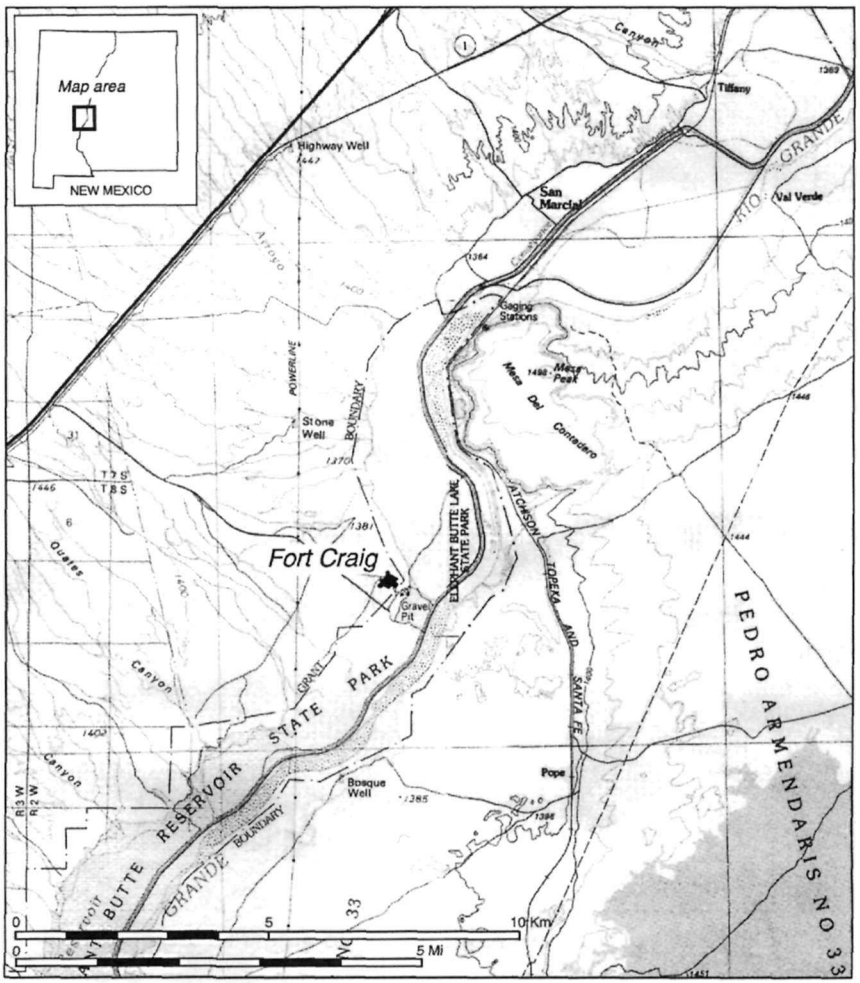


Figure 1.2
Location of Fort Craig, USGS Base Maps Tularosa and Truth or Consequences, NM, 1:100,000
(draft Ron Stauber)

For the earliest European travelers, trekking north from the frontier settlements of Cortez and his Spanish successors deep in Mexico toward the unknown interior of the new continent, Mesa Contadero was the site of relief and rejoicing. For travelers passing south, returning from their explorations of the interior and later from settlements in the northern Rio Grande Valley, the sight of the mesa in the distance brought the knowledge that the worst of their journey was about to begin, that there would be days of extreme hardship, with the very real possibility of death.

The journey for the Spanish explorers, settlers, and traders was excruciatingly slow, since they could move no faster than the ox-drawn carretas and the pace of sheep and cattle that were herded north for settlements on the upper Rio Grande. No water was present on the trail, and side trips to the river or to springs in the distant mountains added days to the passage. Detours to the mountains always held the possibility that the added miles would leave them in far worse condition if the springs were found to be dry.

But the added days also brought the threat of a more imminent danger. Travelers on this section of the Camino Real were not only exposed to the elements of the heat and sun of the summer desert and frigid winds of the treeless plain in winter, they were also open to clear view from the distant mountains. The hooves of the livestock and the churning wheels of the carretas cut deep into the tracks of the road and raised trails of dust behind them. This portion of the journey, with the travelers' supplies and livestock exposed to view in open desert and few natural features for cover or defense, provided a huge trap used by the ancestors of the Mescalero, Chiricahua, and Gila Apaches, from their vantage points in the distant hills.

As a result, this ninety-mile stretch of the Camino Real became known throughout New Spain and, later, throughout much of the New World as the *Jornada del Muerto*, Journey of the Dead Man, or as it is more commonly and loosely translated, "The Journey of Death."

Spanish Exploration

The first Spanish explorers in this region came not from the south but from the north. In 1540, members of the Coronado expedition searching out from Zuni, and leaving in their wake a series of horrendous atrocities against the Tiguex pueblos in the vicinity of modern-day Bernalillo and Albuquerque,[1] entered the province of the Piro-speaking Pueblo Indians. Piro settlements dotted the Rio Grande Valley from the area just south of present-day Belen for about sixty miles south to Milligan Gulch, immediately downstream from Fort Craig. Farther south on the river, through the same ninety-mile region skirted by the Jornada del Muerto, there were no permanent Indian habitations.

Forty years later, in 1582, the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition of nine soldiers and three Franciscan friars, "provided with arms and horses at our own cost," set out from the frontier of New Spain at the mines of Santa Barbara in Vizcaya province on June 6, 1581.[2] By August of that year they had reached the vicinity of modern-day El Paso/Juárez and pressed on into the uninhabited region.

All of the Spanish expeditions into New Mexico carried some of their own provisions, but all were dependent upon food provided by the Indian tribes whom they passed almost continuously on their journeys. Food, blankets, skins, and other materials were received as gifts and tribute, or they were taken by force. When the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition passed into the uninhabited region and searched nine days without finding an Indian settlement, their supplies became seriously low. By the fifteenth day, their provisions were almost depleted and they assembled to consider retreat to the Spanish settlements, far to the south. Instead, they decided to explore one further trail, which led them into the land of the Piros, probably within sight of Mesa Contadero, where the first inhabited pueblo was found at Milligan Gulch.

The Piro inhabitants of the pueblo fled into the mountains and the Spanish chased them on horseback but were stopped by the heavy downpour of an August thunderstorm. On the way back to camp, however, they came upon a single Indian of a different nation.

> We thought that God had led him to us because we had decided to turn back; and as the Lord is most merciful, He remembered us, so that our good purpose, for that it was directed to His holy service, should not fail us but should, on the contrary, be furthered. He therefore sent us the Indian, who told us of what there was in the interior—the many houses; the numerous clothed people; the abundant corn, beans, calabashes, cotton, and wild turkeys; and the fact that the inhabitants wore clothes and had houses three- and four-stories high. He gave us this good news by means of signs, for we could not understand him in any other way. The report brought us great joy, and we gave many thanks to God our Lord for such bountiful favors and for His succor in the moment of greatest need.[3]

This account of joy and relief at entering the Piro Province includes the first known use of the Spanish word "socorro" in referring to the region. It is notable that this word is used to describe God's benevolence (". . . His succor . . .") and not yet the benevolence of the Piro Indians, as it is later attributed, the Indians having fled under pursuit to the mountains.

The Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition, in contrast to the previous expedition of Spanish conquistadors under Coronado and unlike many who came after into other provinces of the Pueblo Indians, did not impose the rights of conquest as they moved slowly north into the Piro nation, from village to village. The people at first fled before them, and they claimed the province for Spain and named it San Filipe, but as Gallegos states in his report of the expedition, "We did not dare to take any of the goods, for we wanted the people to know that we did not intend to harm them."[4]

This humanitarian spirit of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition, for whom discovery of riches was secondary to the conversion of souls, was probably fundamental to the peaceful relationship which did, in fact, develop between the Piro Indians and the Spanish. Ironically, it was this relationship that led to the eventual dissolution of the Piro culture and the abandonment of their homeland.

The Gallegos account of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition of 1581 and 1582 provides a brief, but extraordinary description of the appearance and way of life of the Native Americans living in the shadow of Mesa Contadero, where Fort Craig was later built.[5] The following are excerpts from the Gallegos account:

> [We] came to a pueblo of many houses three stories high, but found no inhabitants. They had left the night before because they had noticed our approach. In the houses we found many turkeys and much cotton and corn. Although we did not see any people in the pueblo on entering it, we did find in the valley many corn fields like those of Mexico, and also fields of beans, calabashes, and cotton . . . .
>
> We found the houses very well planned and built in blocks, with mud walls, whitewashed inside and well decorated with monsters, other animals, and human figures . . . .
>
> They indicated to us that there were in their nation twenty-odd pueblos, and that farther on was another nation, with whom they were at war.[6]

In November of the following year (1582), another expedition of two friars and thirteen companions set out from the mines of Santa Barbara. This was the Espejo expedition, which was chronicled by Luxan in another remarkable surviving document of the era.[7] Luxan provides additional details in his account of the Piros as they were found in February 1583, a year and a half after they were visited by the Chamuscado expedition. The following excerpts are from Luxan's account of the region:

> Some wear tanned deer-skin jackets and others tanned deerskins tied to their bodies. Most of them have, especially for sleeping, quilts made of turkey feathers, because they raise cocks and hens in quantities. The women wear their hair tied up on their heads, and cover their privy parts and bodies with cotton blankets and deerskins, and on top of these, feather quilts in place of cloaks. They wear shoes of tanned buffalo leather and tanned deerskins fashioned like boots. They are an industrious people who plant and gather very fine corn, beans, and calabashes in abundance. Thus the entire river is bordered with sown fields; we found them full of stubble, which was the salvation of our horses . . . .
>
> Their houses are of mud, built by hand, the walls like small adobes, half a yard wide. They contain upper and lower floors and have bedrooms. The people climb to the upper floors by means of movable hand ladders; and the lower parts of the pueblo can be dominated from above. They have large cellars [kivas], and in the lower part, they have their granaries, pantries, and kitchens . . . .
>
> These people do not seem to be bellicose, because they fight [chiefly] with flint-edged clubs [*macanas*] and hide-wrapped stone bludgeons about half a yard long. They have few and poor Turkish bows and poorer arrows.[8]

The Fort Craig Region before the Spanish

The accounts by the Spanish explorers mark the beginning of "recorded" history in New Mexico. The known prehistory of the Piro Province amounts to barely a thumbnail sketch, in comparison with other prehistoric Pueblo provinces in New Mexico. Virtually all that is known of the Piro Province comes from archaeological surveys, which are limited to recording surface remains without excavation (see Marshall and Walt 1984).[9]

Very little professional archaeological excavation of Piro and ancestral Piro ruins has occurred, and that which has been done has been almost entirely for the purpose of salvaging whatever was left after previous mechanical damage to sites. The problem with salvage excavations is that they may not yield representative samples of archaeological information. One of the clearest examples of this occurred in what is so far the most extensive salvage excavation of a Piro site. Excavations along the damaged edge of the town of Qualacú yielded only one identifiable turkey bone.[10] Since the Spanish accounts describe

hundreds of penned turkeys in the Piro towns at contact, one would expect far greater evidence of generations of consumed turkeys in an unbiased archaeological sample.

Also present in the excavations of Qualacú and other smaller-scale salvage excavations have been traces of animals of the riverine environment. Remains of fish, including long-nose gar, turtles, and waterfowl have been found in the limited excavations, but not in quantities large enough to provide statistical support for the impression that the Piros pursued a subsistence strategy that was much more focused on plant and animal husbandry, concentrated on the riverine environment, than many of their Pueblo neighbors to the north, west, and east.

The idea of a more sedentary, domestic way of life is not inconsistent with the fact that the Spanish described the Piro as having only a few, poor "Turkish" bows, and even poorer arrows, especially when this description is contrasted with that of their neighbors and linguistic cousins to the northeast, the Tompiro. The latter, whose settlements centered in the region of modern Mountainair, are described in Spanish accounts as warlike and fierce, with good weapons. This interpretation of the Piro way of life is also consistent with the observation that there appear to be far fewer outlying hunting camps, processing areas, and other signs of utilization of resources away from the river in the Piro Province than have been documented in virtually every other prehistoric Pueblo province.

An abundance of domestic plants and animals, particularly turkeys, and of continuously restocked wild riverine resources (fish, turtles, and migratory ducks, geese, and cranes) may partially account for the Piro's less hostile acceptance of the Spanish impact upon their resources. Other Pueblo groups, whose resources were not sufficient to maintain their own survival without hunting and gathering wild resources over a wide surrounding area, would have been less able and less willing to support Spanish demands.

Although the Piros were the only permanent inhabitants of the area around Fort Craig at the time of Spanish contact, the prehistory of the area is long and varied. Evidence of the first known inhabitants of the New World, the Paleoindian hunters of the late Pleistocene (ca. 12,000 to 5000 B.C.), is well represented by the famous Mockingbird Gap site, about twenty miles northeast of Fort Craig. This site is an extensive complex of Paleoindian and early Archaic (ca. 5000 to 1000 B.C.) campsites which has received only minimal study. Mockingbird Gap is unique not only in the immense time span its components represent but also in that it consists primarily of campsites and not kill sites, the latter being the primary source of knowledge of the very early Paleoindian hunters.

The evolution of the Archaic adaptation, as the Pleistocene fauna became extinct, is represented by numerous sites in the region in addition to Mockingbird Gap. The greatest local concentration of such sites currently known is in the area immediately south of Fort Craig, on the east bank of the Rio Grande between Mesa Contadero and the Fra Cristóbals.[11]

The area in the immediate vicinity of Fort Craig also coincides with the highest concentration of developmental Pueblo sites (termed the San Marcial phase by Marshall and Walt [1984]), corresponding to the Basketmaker III phase in other regions of New Mexico. The shift from the nomadic Archaic hunting and gathering tradition to a semi-sedentary or sedentary lifestyle with increasing dependence upon horticulture and agriculture occurs throughout the Southwest some time between the beginning of the Common Era and about A.D. 800. Although no absolute dates have been recovered through excavation of San Marcial phase sites in the Fort Craig area, the transition probably occurred here between about A.D. 300 and 800, based on the ceramics found at these sites.[12]

The prehistoric periods that correspond to Pueblo I and Pueblo II (ca. A.D. 800–1250), termed Tajo and Elmendorf by Marshall and Walt (1984), show an increase in population. These settlements expanded north from Fort Craig and south from early Pueblo occupations along the upper Rio Salado, with the greatest concentration of sites still being on the east bank of the Rio Grande. During this era, however, settlement appears to have been centered opposite the present-day town of Socorro.

Throughout much of the Tajo and Elmendorf periods, Pueblo towns of increased size were almost invariably located on the gravel terraces at the confluences of major (but only intermittently flowing) tributaries of the Rio Grande. These town locations hint at a considerable sophistication in the agricultural technology employed by the prehistoric Native American cultures of the region. Spanish and later European writers note that prior to the construction of dams, the flow of the Rio Grande and some of its tributaries disappeared into the sand during dry periods. The location of the prehistoric towns at the mouths of large, relatively flat-bottomed arroyos suggests that the river flow during this prehistoric era may also have been erratic, and that the inhabitants may have been hedging their bets by planting both the river bottom and the alluvial terraces within the arroyos. The latter practice, channeling and utilizing water run-off from intermittent rainfall away from flowing rivers, was a strategy that was raised to high art by contemporary Pueblo populations in other regions of New Mexico. The location of ancestral Piro towns during this era may indicate a long period of climatic uncertainty.

The period from about A.D. 1250 through Spanish contact in the early 1500s saw enormous changes among the native populations of the Southwest. Vast watersheds where dry-land and rainfall catchment agriculture had been practiced by large indigenous populations were abandoned. The Chaco culture, which covered an immense region of what are now four states—and which bordered this area on its southeastern periphery—had collapsed, and many of its subregions were now abandoned. The long and intensive occupations of the east side of the Malpais near Acoma, the Mimbres in southwestern New Mexico, and the Little Colorado headwaters to the west of the Rio Grande near present-day Quemado collapsed, and these regions too were abandoned.

This period of extreme (and in many cases, terminal) stress in surrounding regions that had supported large Pueblo populations coincided with notable changes in the Rio Abajo region. At about A.D. 1300, the Pueblo towns from Fort Craig north to San Acacia began a dramatic increase in size and number. Many sites appear to have been located and constructed with an emphasis on defense. Large towns with defensive walls are found on steep-sided volcanic buttes and gravel ridges, especially in the vicinity of modern-day San Acacia. On the basis of comparison of site number and size with earlier periods, Marshall suggests a sevenfold increase in population during this era.[13] While this may be attributable to an influx of people from the collapsing cultures of surrounding regions, one notable piece of evidence is missing. If unified groups from the abandoned regions moved to the Rio Grande to establish competing towns among the ancestral Piro, then these town ruins should be readily traceable to the region from which the people came through analyses of archaeological assemblages, especially through identification of ceramic traditions. No such distinctive sites have been found, which suggests an alternative interpretation.

It is likely that the dramatic increase in population over about 200 years (ca. A.D. 1300–1540) resulted from the success of the dual strategy of river irrigation and run-off farming. If immigrants from other regions of collapsing cultures entered the Piro Province, those who stayed were probably not in unified groups and were probably acculturated directly into the Piro towns. Toward the end of the prehistoric period the success of the dual farming strategy during earlier marginal eras may have been augmented by a return to a dependable year-round flow of the Rio Grande sometime prior to the arrival of the Spanish. At the time of the Entrada the Piro were described as being almost exclusively focused on riverside agriculture, natural resources provided by the river, and animal husbandry.



Figure 1.3 Location of documented Colonial Piro sites in the Rio Abajo region (from Marshall and Walt 1984:140, *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province*, New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe)

Early Colonization in New Mexico

The relatively good relationship between the Piro and the Spanish, in comparison to that which developed in other Pueblo provinces, was probably largely based on the success of the Piro's riverine way of life, since gifts and tribute to the Spanish did not over stress the subsistence system—and on a certain measure of luck in the earliest encounters.

Coronado's journey of conquest of 1540–1542 was quite different in method and spirit from Chamuscado's explorations forty years later in 1581–1582. Coronado's reputation preceded him into the Piro Province, but the nightmare atrocities of his officers and men against the Tiguex (reportedly hundreds were slaughtered and burned at the stake while under a false truce)[14] were not repeated here. There is also the possibility that Coronado may have inadvertently (since he reached the Tiguex first) employed the technique of playing upon aboriginal hostilities to pit traditional enemies against each other. The news that their enemies had been so severely punished by the Spanish may have been the basis for an alliance with the Piros. There was also a measure of luck in the Chamuscado encounter, for although the expedition was ostensibly humanitarian in purpose, Gallegos recounts, "If they had attempted to prevent our coming we would have entered by force in order to examine the region and what it contained, for we had already endured many hardships."[15]

These factors may have paved the way for the Espejo expedition, which passed through the Piro Province without incident about two years later (noting that the Piros provided them with great quantities of fish as well as other supplies), and for the Oñate colonization of 1598.

While Coronado had entered from the north and Chamuscado and Espejo had approached from the south by tracing the banks of the Rio Grande on foot and horseback, Oñate's 1598 caravan of settlers with baggage and supplies made the first documented crossing of the Jornada del Muerto. Oñate established the difficult route to avoid the deep arroyos and steep ridges of the uninhabited region, which were totally impassible with their equipment. They rejoined the river at a point they named Paraje de Fra Cristóbal, a few miles south of the later location of Fort Craig. "Paraje" (Camp), as it was called when it later grew into a settlement, became a place for resting and recovery for north-bound travelers on the Camino Real and a staging point for returning travelers and traders to prepare for the rigors of the Jornada. It also became the staging point for the extinction of the Piro culture.

For eighty-two years (from 1598 to 1680), Oñate and his Spanish successors established tenuous settlements along the major water courses of northern New Mexico. These efforts centered mainly in the region of modern-day Santa Fe (Oñate's original headquarters were at the nearby San Juan

Pueblo), but missions and *visitas* (unstaffed churches served by priests of nearby missions) were established throughout the Piro region. The black mesa north of Fort Craig became known as Mesa Contadero (the counting place) during this era, when its base adjacent to the Rio Grande provided a constricted trail for counting livestock and assessing losses after the desert crossing.

Fray Alonso de Benavides's account of the establishment of a mission at the northern Piro village of Sevilleta in the mid 1620s describes a drastic change for the Piros. Sevilleta Pueblo had been destroyed by wars with "other nations" (no doubt the Apache, but possibly also other traditional enemies, such as the southern Tiguex Pueblos), and the people of the pueblo were wandering the hills. Benavides reestablished that pueblo and several others that he had found burned.[16]

In all of the Pueblo provinces the relationship between the sedentary Pueblo farmers and the nomadic Apache and Navajo bands was ever-changing. Periods of stability, with mutual trade, were followed by sudden reversals into warfare. The Piro Province, which geographically formed a narrow sliver along the Rio Grande, deep into Apache country, was extremely vulnerable. The river in this region formed an inexact border between the Navajos to the northwest, the western Apaches of the Mangus/Quemado region, the southwestern Apaches of the Warm Springs/Gila region, the Mescalero Apaches to the east, and the wider-ranging eastern Apaches and Comanches of the buffalo plains. All of these nomadic groups ranged into the Piro Province, either in their hunting forays or specifically to trade and raid as part of their annual round. The Apache and Navajo subsistence strategy of this and succeeding eras consisted of some agriculture (or horticulture, where economic species were assisted early in the growing season and returned to at harvest time), but primarily centered on a mobile strategy of hunting, gathering, trading, and raiding, not necessarily in that order. Much later, when the raiding aspect of their economy brought almost continuous retaliatory pressure from the Spanish, Mexican, and United States military, raiding ironically became the most dependable source of essential supplies under warfare conditions.

At the time of early Spanish contact in the mid and late 1500s, the descriptions of the Piros as prosperous and unwarlike suggest that there had been a considerable period of stability between the Piros and Apaches. Clearly, this changed drastically during the time between Oñate's descriptions in 1598 and the condition in which Benavides found them, wandering the hills with their pueblos burned, thirty years later. Although there are Spanish accounts of Apaches trading with the Piros between 1620 and 1680, relations never returned to the apparent stability of the immediate precontact era.

Apache and Navajo raids kept Spanish settlements in the province to a minimum, but the maintenance of missions and small military contingents in the region was essential, since it was a critical link in the lifeline of the Camino Real, which connected them with the colonial government deep in Mexico.

Spanish relations with the northern and western Pueblos during the period prior to 1680 ranged from tense to horrific. Oñate passed through the Piro Province without incident, but when he met resistance from the Piro's more warlike linguistic cousins, the Tompiro, who lived east of the mountains in the next province north, he punished them, reportedly killing 900 and capturing 400. When one of his officers was killed at the western pueblo of Acoma, he sent the officer's brother at the head of a military force to punish that pueblo, resulting in one of the most vivid accounts of an atrocity on the continent since the days of Cortez.[17]

The Pueblo Revolt and the Reconquest

Like Cortez, the Spanish in New Mexico were assisted by old hostilities among the native peoples, which kept the tribes divided under their rule. If trouble occurred at one pueblo, there was time to mount a force, travel to that place, and inflict punishment, while the remainder of the pueblos were each held by tiny forces, often by as few as four to eight soldiers, who were successful because the Pueblo people feared the same treatment. In 1680, however, the northern Pueblos linked together for the first and only time in a widespread, coordinated revolt. The Pueblos did not mass a force for a frontal attack on the Spanish; rather on the appointed day or close to it, each village rose up, killing or driving out the few Spanish who held them. They murdered the priests and burned their missions, until the entire Spanish colony north of the Piro Province was in shambles. The Spanish survivors retreated from settlement to settlement, and as they learned that all of their countrymen had been struck and there was no secure stronghold, they joined together in caravans to retreat from the hostile regions.

The Piro, because of their long history of relatively peaceful relations with the Spanish, were excluded from the secret plan for the revolt because of the possibility that they would reveal it to the Spanish. There may have been something to this suspicion, since the Piro later did reveal the Manso Revolt in El Paso. The majority of the Piro apparently were surprised, both by the Pueblo Revolt and by their exclusion. With their numbers already decimated by Apache raids and European diseases; with the prospect of a new, unified enemy consisting of all the northern Pueblos—and with the certainty that Apache attacks would no longer be hindered by a Spanish military presence—many of the Piros joined the Spanish retreat caravan as it waited for stragglers and prepared for the Jornada del Muerto at Paraje, just south of the present location of Fort Craig.

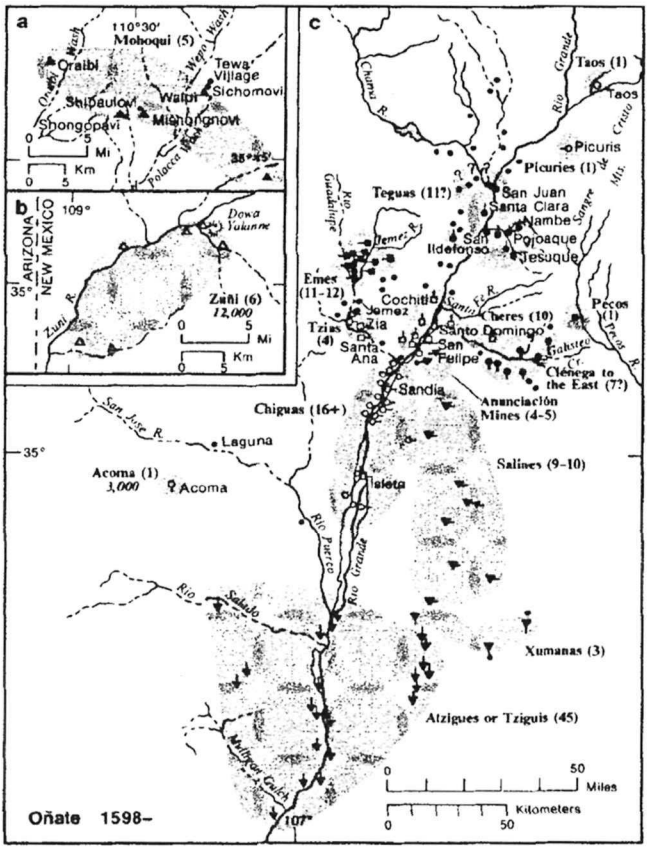
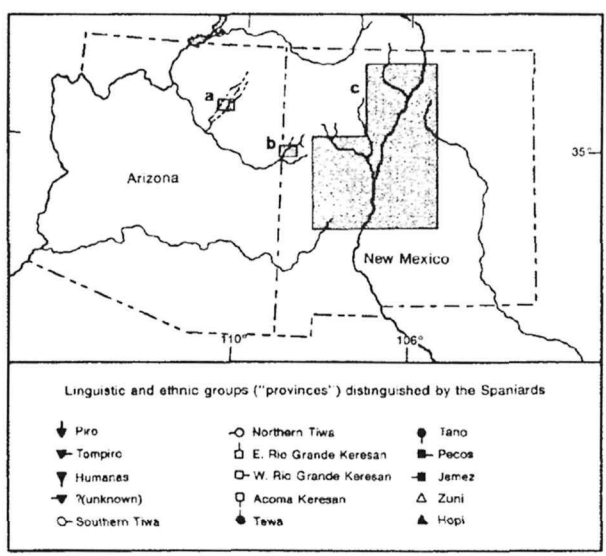


Figure 1.4
Pueblo language groups or "provinces" as reported by Spanish entradas. The number of Pueblos in each group is in parentheses; population figures, when given, are italicized. Modern settlements are named. See key map for the location of areas shown on the maps. (from Schroeder 1979:239, *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 9, Smithsonian Institution)



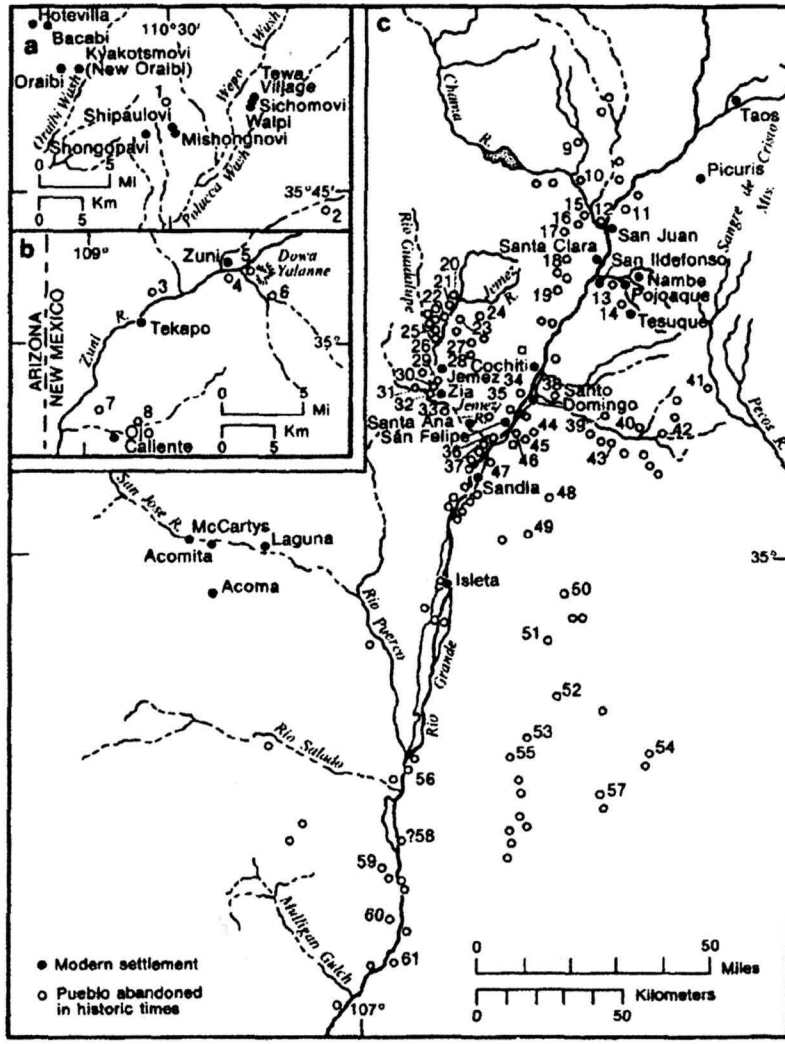


Figure 1.5 Pueblos abandoned in historic times (numbered) and modern settlements: 1. Payupki; 2. Awatovi; 3. Kwakina; 4. Halona; 5. Matsaki; 6. Kiakima; 7. Hawikuh; 8. Kianawa (Kechipauan); 9. Sapawe; 10. Tsama; 11. Pioge; 12. Yunque; 13. Jacona; 14. Cuyamungue; 15. Teewi; 16. Ku-Owinge; 17. Pesere; 18. Puye; 19. Tsirege; 20. Unshagi; 21. Nonyishagi; 22. Amushungkwa; 23. Giusewa; 24. Seshiuqua; 25. Astialakwa; 26. Patoqua; 27. Kiatsukwa; 28. Quiashidshi?; 29. LA 499; 30. LA 241; 31. LA 924; 32. Old Zia (LA 384); 33. LA 374; 34. LA 922; 35. Old Santa Ana; 36. LA 2049; 37. Kuaua; 38. Gipuy; 39. San Marcos; 40. Galisteo; 41. Pecos; 42. San Cristóbal; 43. San Lázaro; 44. Tunque; 45. LA 1779; 46. Old San Felipe; 47. Puaray; 48. Paako; 49. Portezuelo; 50. Chililí; 51. Tajique; 52. Quarái; 53. Abó; 54. Tabirá; 55. Tenabó; 56. Seelocú; 57. Gran Quivira (Humanas); 58. Alamillo; 59. Pilabó; 60. Senecú; 61. Qualacu. The names of the abandoned pueblos are in some cases renderings of names applied to the ruins by Indians of the modern period. (from Schroeder 1979:239, *Handbook of North American Indians,* Vol. 9, Smithsonian Institution)

Other Piros fled to neighboring pueblos of the northern and western provinces. The majority, who traveled south with the Spanish, established the pueblos of Isleta del Sur and Socorro del Sur, where their descendants still live, in what are now close-in agricultural suburbs of El Paso, Texas.

The alliance of the northern Pueblos was short-lived, and during and after the Reconquest of New Mexico by the Spanish a decade later, resistance was sporadic and unorganized. Spanish settlements were reestablished, dissident pueblos were punished, and for more than a century (approximately 1700–1800) the abandoned Piro Province formed a frontier through which the Camino Real lifeline to Mexico was held by tiny Spanish settlements under constant threat of destruction by Apache bands and by occasional, far-ranging Navajos.

Politics in the "New World"

Spain's policy was to take, hold, and never relinquish territory. And in Mexico and New Mexico, this policy was carried out for over 300 years, virtually from the moment of the news from Columbus until the Mexican revolution of 1821.

Cortez, who conquered Mexico in 1521, although younger than Columbus, was contemporary with him and their lives overlapped. Coronado set out from already established colonies just nineteen years later; Chamuscado, Espejo, and Oñate followed quickly in a continuous, unrelenting succession. All of these explorers and colonizers (with the exception of Columbus) were pure Spaniards, born in Spain, who shared the vision of a global Spanish empire. What none of the European powers envisioned during the beginnings of their empires and settlements in North America was the evolving allegiances of the generations of colonists who would be born within the new territories.

By 1776, the Englishmen of the thirteen colonies lining the eastern seaboard, after generations of native birth, identified themselves more with their own land than with England and broke free in revolution. Spain found itself with a new, aggressively expanding neighbor on its eastern New World frontier.

A few years earlier, in 1762, Spain had obtained the vast Louisiana Territory from France as settlement of a war in Europe. With this gigantic French territory, which formed a buffer between Spain's original New World holdings and the thirteen colonies of England, Spain acquired a new problem: *Frenchmen*. For the first time, and as an exception only in Louisiana, Spain modified its policy of permitting only Spanish descendants on Spanish soil and allowed the French settlers to remain and become Spanish subjects, with the provision that they accept the Catholic faith and swear allegiance to the Spanish Crown.

With the French occupants as a precedent, in 1788, Spain experimented with a plan to allow foreign immigration into the Louisiana Territory. This was in response to the threat of the United States on the east, only a decade into

independence and already expanding toward Spanish territories. The Spanish strategy was to increase strength and population in the new territories, while at the same time depleting population on the United States side of the frontier by drawing settlers away to become Spanish subjects, thereby forming a buffer against expansion. Spain's concerns about United States expansionism were not imagined, for this action caused Thomas Jefferson to remark, "I wish a hundred thousand of our inhabitants would accept the invitation. It may be the means of delivering to us peaceably what may otherwise cost us a war."[18]

When the Louisiana Territory was ceded back to France in 1800 (again as a settlement of European wars), and then sold to the United States in 1803 through the Louisiana Purchase, it brought the expanding eastern nation suddenly to the doorstep of New Spain's northern provinces. All that stood between the centuries-old holdings along the Rio Grande and the aggressively expanding United States was the already disputed territory of Texas.

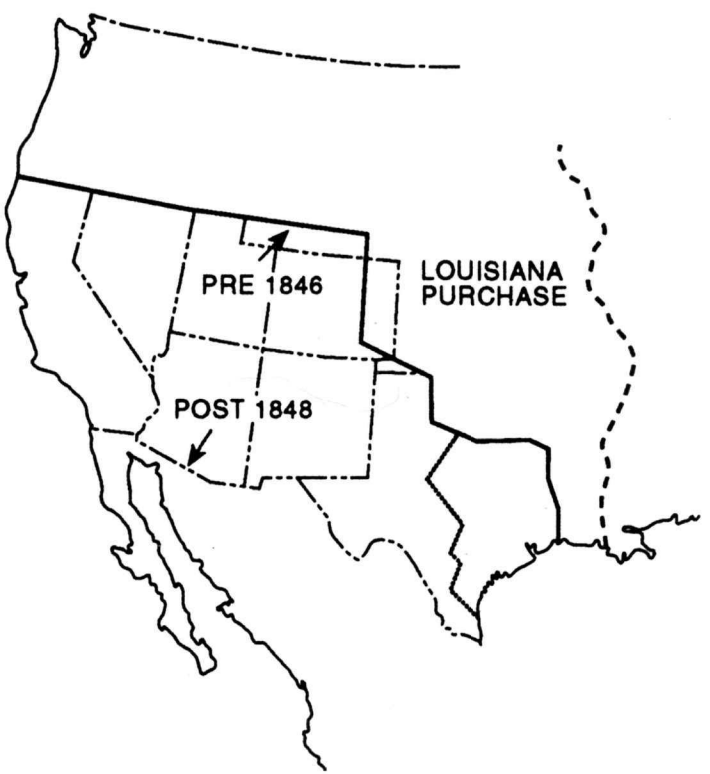


Figure 1.6 Boundaries of the United States after the Louisiana Purchase and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the Mexican-American War.

So Close to Texas, So Far from Heaven

By the early 1800s, Spain and many of its possessions around the world were entering into an era of chaos. September 16, 1810, began a period of revolution and bloodshed in Mexico that continued for over a hundred years. Indeed, the revolution continues today and shapes the way that Mexico views itself, the United States, and the rest of the world. The initial revolt, begun by a renegade priest on behalf of the native and mixed-blood population against the Spanish administrators, failed and was put down brutally. But it set the stage for later success and drew the United States into its first ambivalent interventions in Mexico.

Although the disjointed revolts of Father Hildago and Juan Batista de las Casas were put down by the spring of 1811, a third revolutionary leader briefly emerged in 1812. Bernado Gutierrez de Lara, with the aid and approval of the United States, invaded Texas in that year and declared Texas a free state the following year, after capturing San Antonio. Texas was retaken with extreme brutality by Spanish royalist troops, and two more invasions, in 1819 and 1821, ended in the same manner, leaving the vast territory of Texas in such turmoil that much of the population fled.[19]

The disputed boundary between the United States and Mexico was settled in 1819 with the "Transcontinental Treaty Line," under which the United States finally rescinded its claim to Texas, which it had asserted was part of the Louisiana Purchase. At the same time, Spain gave up its rights, by "prior exploration," to the Pacific Northwest. This treaty was stalled by the United States, however, and not ratified until February 22, 1821—two days before Mexico successfully declared its independence from Spain. The United States immediately sought to renegotiate the boundary with the new republic of Mexico, but it remained the de facto boundary between the two countries until a new treaty made it official in 1832.

The change from Spanish rule to home rule for Mexico had little immediate impact upon the settlements along the Rio Grande in New Mexico. But, a very significant change began at a small scale, which then grew concurrently with the much more volatile situation in neighboring Texas. Under Spanish rule, not only foreign immigrants, but also foreign traders, were prohibited from entering New Mexico. Nevertheless, American traders had begun to trickle into New Mexico illegally in the early 1800s, frequently spending years in prison in southern Mexico for their breach of Spanish law.

After 1821 and independence from Spain, Mexican trade restrictions were relaxed, to the great relief of the inhabitants of the northern Rio Grande, who

had suffered from inadequate supply lines to the south for generations. Prohibition of foreign immigration continued, however, in contrast with the eastern frontier in Texas.

In the last years of Spanish rule, while the Transcontinental Treaty Line awaited ratification, more invasions of Texas were attempted, and first Spain, then Mexico decided to meet the border threat with the extraordinary means for which Louisiana had set the precedent. A complex system of immigration laws and provisions for ownership of Mexican land by foreigners was established, culminating in the Colonization Laws of 1824 and 1825. One result of these laws was the establishment of the *empresario* system, under which wealthy agents for immigrants could be granted huge tracts of land and special privileges for bringing in and managing specific numbers of immigrants. Among the *empresarios* were Moses and Stephen Austin, Green de Witt, and Martin de Leon. The majority were from Southern slave states, and many of the immigrants who made up the required numbers for grants of land were, in fact, slaves—in spite of the fact that slavery had been outlawed in Mexico after the 1821 revolution. This early colonization by Americans of northern Mexico under Mexican law set both the stage and the climate for the Confederate invasion of New Mexico a few decades later.

With a slave territory established in Texas, the American colonists there declared independence from Mexico in 1836. The declaration resulted in war, as Mexico attempted to retain its northeastern territory. Santa Anna's final defeat can probably be attributed to his own brutality, which rallied both Texans and Americans against him. The well-known battle of the Alamo is only one example of his ruthlessness and pales beside an instance in which he killed hundreds of Texans, not in battle, but in one single, mass execution.

With victory over Santa Anna, the now independent country of Texas claimed territory that extended a western boundary to the Rio Grande, from El Paso north to present-day Colorado. This came as news to the 30,000 or so newly independent Mexicans, who had lived along the Rio Grande for generations, and it remained in contention through the Mexican-American War, ten years later.

Texas was annexed by the United States in 1845, escalating the hostility between the two newly independent nations. The hostility turned to violence in 1846, in a war that has been tragically forgotten in the United States, but which will never be forgotten in Mexico. It has stained Mexican-American relations to this day.

The Mexican-American War

The Mexican-American War of 1846–1848 has been almost completely overshadowed in our own national memory by the tragedy of the Civil War a decade later. But the annexation of Texas as a slave state and the subsequent war with Mexico are important here not simply as a remote historical tie with the Civil War. The war with Mexico *caused* the establishment of Fort Craig, and it shaped the lives of the American soldiers there, who first fought Mexicans, then Indians, and then each other at the Battle of Valverde.

Some of the participants in the Civil War Battle of Valverde in 1862 were in their sixties at the time that they fought. It is extraordinary to consider the changes in world order that these men had seen firsthand. The Americans from the east would have been born into the original thirteen states, only about twenty years after the revolution; the native New Mexican militia, only recently and somewhat uncertainly Americans themselves, would have been born as subjects of Spain. Senior soldiers from the eastern states would have had direct contact in their early years with the generation of the American Revolution. All but the youngest soldiers at the Battle of Valverde would have lived through, and in many cases participated in, the westward expansion, the annexation of Louisiana and Texas, and the Mexican War. Conversely, some of the youngest soldiers who fought at Valverde lived on into our own century, saw the coming of the railroad, telegraph, the automobile, and the industrial revolution.

The Mexican-American War was the United States's first war on foreign soil, and it is difficult to portray it as anything but an adventure by a young, aggressive country, seeking to expand into vast territories with new-found military muscle. Ulysses S. Grant, who served as a captain in the Mexican War, a general in the Civil War, and president of the United States, described the Mexican War years later in his 1885 *Memoirs* as "the most unjust war ever waged by a stronger nation against a weaker nation . . . an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies."[20]

There is little doubt that the United States provoked the act of war when President James Polk ordered Gen. Zachary Taylor to move forward and establish a fort that directly threatened the Mexican city of Matamoros on the Rio Grande, at the tip of Texas. From Taylor's threatening position opposite the Mexican city, where the Mexicans had massed an army, he launched scouts across the river until one was finally fired upon. The United States reacted instantly with full-scale war upon its neighbor. The only arguments about the origins of the war lie in whether or not the previous actions of Mexico were provocative enough to justify the overt aggression of the United States.[21]

In the United States, perceptions of the Mexican-American war—when it is perceived at all—are colored, especially in New Mexico and California, by Kearny's almost bloodless march through the northern Mexican provinces from New Mexico to the Pacific Coast. This is the campaign of the Mexican War most frequently included in the history books of elementary school children as a footnote to the origins of their respective states. This perception of the Mexican War, as an almost friendly, patriotic romp, is doubly tragic in that it contributes to our national misunderstanding of Mexican-American relations and denigrates the memory of the thousands of Americans and Mexicans who died in the vicious and bloody struggles that took place deep in Mexico, far south of Kearny's route. As John Eisenhower recounts, "the cost in American lives was staggering. Of the 104,556 men who served in the army, both regulars and volunteers, 13,768 men died, the highest death rate of any war in our history."[22]

Gen. Stephen Kearny's Army of the West marched across and occupied New Mexico, including what would later be the Fort Craig region, meeting little resistance until they reached California. Meanwhile, Gens. Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott plunged deep into Mexico. The arms, the tactics, and the men who fought in the bloody battles for Mexican cities directly shaped the character of the American Civil War, which followed just thirteen years later. It is because of the closeness of the two tragedies, and the fact that the latter was fought by Americans on American soil, that the Mexican War has been all but forgotten in this country.

Mexicans, however, will never forget, any more than Americans would, if New York, Washington, and Atlanta had been defeated and occupied by a foreign power that took everything west of the Mississippi River as the price of withdrawal. The losses of the war are commemorated everywhere in Mexico—in monuments, squares, and street names. Even on a back road in the hills north of Ciudad Chihuahua, one may find today an isolated monument to *Los Niños Heroes*, the child heros of a Mexican military school who marched onto the field of battle to defend their country from invaders and were killed by American fire.[23] The feelings of Mexicans toward Americans as a result of this war are bitter and deep and poorly understood in the United States.

The Mexican War provided a test of tactics and weapons and a training ground for American army officers, who would soon use them against each other. It was during the Mexican War that smoothbore muskets were replaced with vastly more accurate and effective rifled barrels; flintlock pistols and their single-shot percussion successors were replaced with repeating percussion revolvers; the first amphibious Marine assault took place at Veracruz ("The

Halls of Montezuma"); stagnant heavy artillery was replaced with rapidly mobile smaller guns; and the aggressive, mobile, smaller armies of Taylor and Scott were able to defeat vastly superior forces entrenched in one of the last expressions of traditional European warfare. Amazingly, the drug ether was used for the first time in the Mexican War as a pain suppressant in surgery, although its scarcity, even thirteen years later, led to the Civil War nightmare of battlefield amputations upon conscious patients.

The Mexican War set the stage of experience for the American officers who would build Fort Craig and fight between themselves over its territory in the next decade. Ulysses S. Grant, who came to hate the war with Mexico, marched into its battles only three years out of West Point. Robert E. Lee opened the trail to Mexico City. Jefferson Davis and his Mississippi Rifles broke a Mexican charge at a critical point in a battle. Edward R. S. Canby and Henry Hopkins Sibley learned the tactics and gained the battle experience that they would pit first against the Indians, when they fought side-by-side leading parallel columns into Navajo country, and then against each other at Fort Craig and Valverde.

When the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago was signed on February 2, 1848, and eventually ratified by both the United States and Mexican congresses, the result was that *more than half* of the sovereign territory of Mexico was ceded and annexed to the United States. These territories included the loosely held northern territories of what are now Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, and the long-held and hard-won territories of California and New Mexico, the latter secured by Coronado, Chamuscado, Espejo, and Oñate almost 300 years before. In the treaty was the provision that both countries would establish forts along their new boundaries for mutual defense in the New Mexico/Arizona region against the Apache, who roamed back and forth across the new border, causing disruptions in travel and settlement. The United States began establishing military forts in New Mexico Territory (which then included both the modern states of New Mexico and Arizona) almost immediately, as much to secure their new holdings from any Mexican reversal as to meet the terms of the agreement concerning the Apaches.

The Fort on the Camino Real

Forts were established to hold population centers, and at critical points of travel, central to regions of Indian problems, where campaigns could be mounted against the hostile tribes. One of the key and critical points of travel, and a central point for mounting campaigns, was the northern terminus of the Jornada del Muerto. This region, which had been abandoned by the Piro Pueblo Indians

about 175 years earlier, was now occupied by small Spanish settlements under constant threat from Apaches and Navajos from all sides. The Camino Real still formed the primary communication, trade, and military link between Albuquerque and Santa Fe and the southern towns of Mesilla (Las Cruces) and El Paso. To protect and hold this important route through the central region of the Rio Grande and to establish a point from which to mount campaigns when needed against the Apache and Navajo, the United States established Fort Conrad four years after the Mexican War in 1852.

Fort Conrad was built, of all places, in the bottom of an arroyo, at its confluence with the Rio Grande. The obvious threat of damage from flash floods was preceded by problems with the construction of the fort itself, which included palisade walls of cottonwood timbers that began failing almost before the fort was completed. Fort Conrad was founded in 1852; the following winter of 1853–1854 work was begun on a new fort about five miles downstream on a low bluff overlooking the Rio Grande. This fort was constructed of adobe by elements of the Third U.S. Infantry and named in honor of one of their favored young officers of the Mexican War, Captain L. S. Craig, who was killed by deserters from the California campaign while surveying the new international boundary.

Neither Fort Conrad nor Fort Craig was built in a highly defensive position, and the possibility of direct assault against them was probably not a consideration until long after Conrad had been abandoned and Fort Craig stood in the way of Sibley's advance in 1861. The general location of Fort Craig was selected to hold the north-south route of the Camino Real and Santa Fe–Chihuahua Trail and to centralize campaigns into surrounding regions. The specific location may have been chosen in large part owing to the availability of forage for horses on the surrounding plain and to the slight elevation above the river, which would have lessened the insect problems that were probably the primary reason why Fort Conrad was repeatedly referred to as an unhealthy and unwholesome location.

In the articles that follow, the authors will discuss the formation and construction of Fort Craig, life among soldiers at contemporary frontier forts, Indian campaigns mounted from Fort Craig, the Battle of Valverde, and the later Indian wars, which, as the army accomplished its objectives, led to the final abandonment of Fort Craig. •

Notes

1. George Parker Winship, trans., *The Journey of Coronado, 1540–1542* (New York: Allerton, 1904), pp. 47–69.
2. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580–1594* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), p. 68.
3. Ibid., p. 81.
4. Ibid., p. 82.
5. Ibid., pp. 80–83.
6. This is a reference to the Southern Tiwa, who occupied the Rio Grande and Jemez drainages from about present-day Los Lunas to San Isidro. Geographically, the closest surviving descendants would be the people of Isleta Pueblo.
7. Ibid., pp. 153–212.
8. Ibid., pp. 170–174.
9. Michael P. Marshall and Henry J. Walt, *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 1984).
10. Michael P. Marshall, *Qualacú: Archeological Investigation of a Piro Pueblo* (Albuquerque: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and University of New Mexico, Office of Contract Archeology, 1987), p. 97.
11. Cye Williams Gossett, in Marshall and Walt, *Rio Abajo,* pp. 17–33.
12. Marshall and Walt, *Rio Abajo,* p. 35.
13. Ibid., p. 135.
14. Winship, *Journey of Coronado,* pp. 47–52.
15. Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery of New Mexico,* p. 82.
16. Frederick W. Hodge, George P. Hammond, and Agipito Rey, *Fray Alonso de Benavides' Revised Memorial of 1634, with Numerous Supplementary Documents Elaborately Annotated.* (Coronado Cuatro Centennial Publications, 1540–1940, vol. IV, George P. Hammond, ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1945).
17. George P. Hammond, ed. *Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico,* (Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540–1940, vol. V. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1945), pp. 428–479.
18. David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier 1821–1846, The American Southwest under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), p. 160.
19. Ibid., p. 10.
20. Ulysses Simpson Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant,* vol. 1 (New York: Charles A. Webster, 1885).
21. John Eisenhower, *So Far from God* (New York: Random House, 1989), pp. xvii–xviii.
22. Ibid.
23. This monument with the bas-relief faces and names of the child heros can be found by taking the non-toll highway bypass, about twenty miles north of Chihuahua City. *Los Niños Heroes* is also a main artery in Chihuahua and a common street or public square name in many other Mexican cities.

CHAPTER 2

Marion Cox Grinstead

Back at the Fort

THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN



Living quarters and the work environment are part and parcel of military morale. To speak only of rations, uniforms and accoutrements, or of bravado and misery in the field, is to tell but a fraction of the tale. Unfortunately, garrison life is usually ignored except as it relates to scouts and campaigns.[1] Soldiers spent most of their enlistments at the fort, and in doing so, much of their duty time was spent in erecting and maintaining the buildings. Fort Craig was no exception to this pattern.

Piecing together the sequence of constuction at Fort Craig is a tortuous proposition. There is one roll of microfilm in the National Archives that contains a fraction of the business conducted by the post quartermaster, who was also almost always the subsistence officer. Many of the documents are out of order chronologically as well as within themselves.[2] The first time the fort was deactivated in 1878, all records were boxed up and sent east for storage. Repeated efforts to have the documents returned to Fort Craig when it was reoccupied in 1880 were only partially successful as some boxes were lost in transit.[3]

Even if the records had been delivered to Fort Craig intact, information would have been missing. Although many men served honorably as post quartermaster, a few were quite inventive: one took kickbacks and bribes; several were accused of the same; two were alcoholics; one shot himself in the foot and subsequently died from the wound; one took all the papers pertaining to his term in the position with him, and all attempts to have them returned were ignored. And of course, the ravages of time together with careless handling contributed to large gaps in the records.

The sequence of building and maintenance can be pieced together, however, if incompletely, from post orders, letters received, letters sent and endorsements,

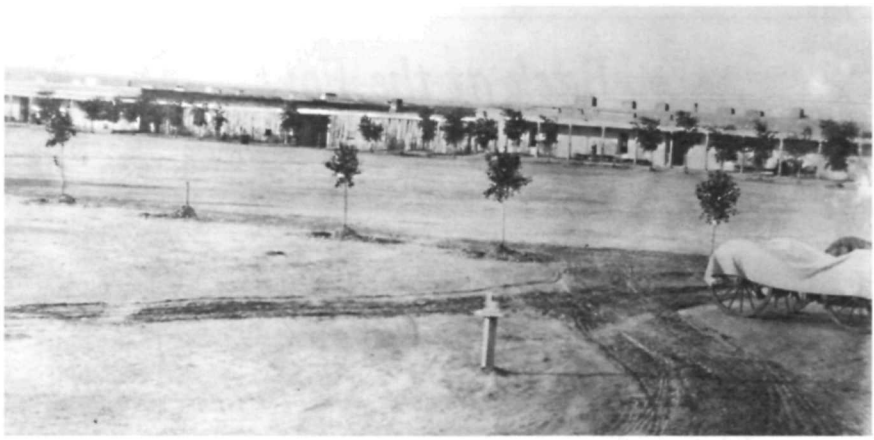


Figure 2.1
Enlisted men's quarters, Fort Craig ca. 1865–68.
(National Archives III-SC-87960; also Museum of New Mexico neg# 14514)

and the reminiscences of men who were stationed at Fort Craig. What follows is a brief history of the fort and then an area by area summary of what is known of the building and repair sequences.

History of Occupation

Fort Craig was built in the winter of 1853–1854 to replace Fort Conrad, a site that became tied up in legal problems because it was located on private land. Additionally, the Conrad site was not a particularly healthy one, and the flimsy quarters did little to improve matters. It was also believed that the post was not well located to handle the Indian problems in the area.[4] Moving the garrison to the new site about nine miles down the Rio Grande and still on the west bank did little to solve the problem, of course, and it embroiled the military in further difficulty with the heirs of Pedro Armendariz who owned the land the new post occupied.

Detachments from Fort Conrad had been working at Fort Craig for some time before the new site was first occupied on March 31, 1854. The post was named for Capt. Louis S. Craig of the Third U.S. Infantry, who had been killed pursuing deserters in California nearly two years earlier.[5]

The original Fort Craig was a simple frontier post, built primarily of adobe, possibly with two picket post buildings, and fenced with a wall built of adobe.[6] The orientation was roughly north-south on the long axis, and while the post

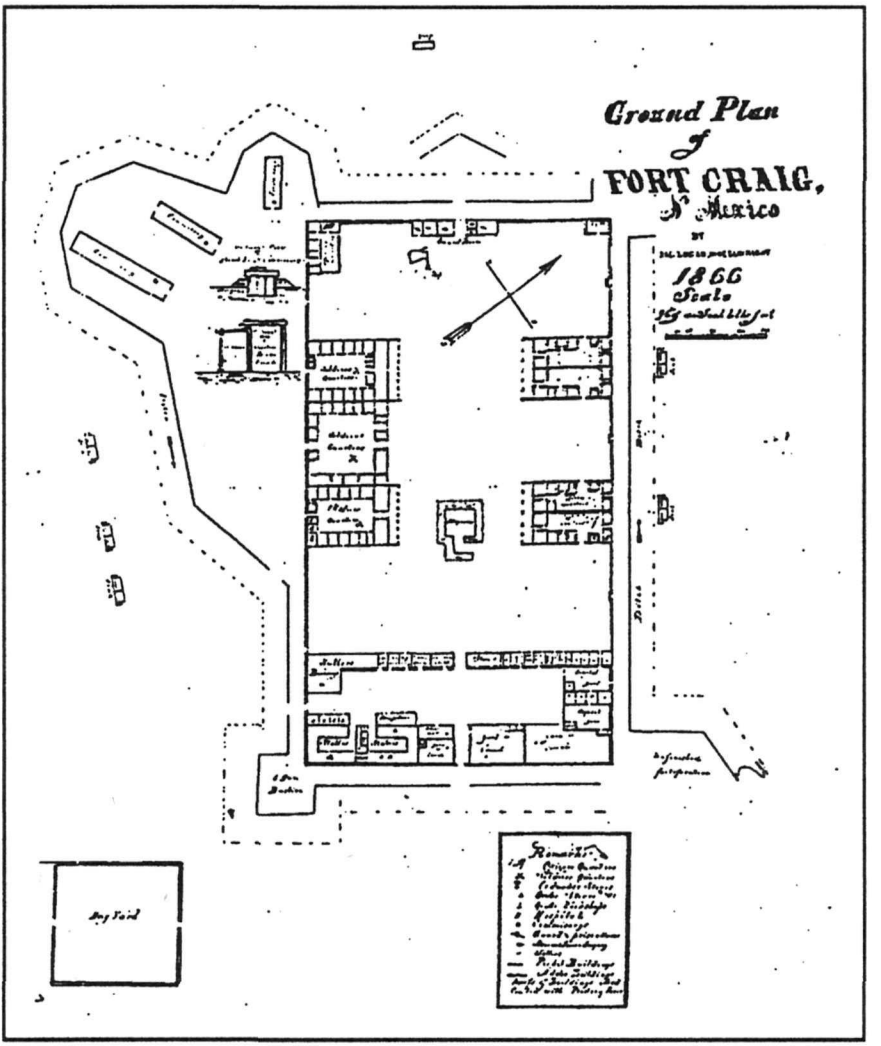


Figure 2.2
Plan of Fort Craig, 1866.

quartermasters certainly knew that this alignment was not precise, buildings were referred to as if they were located according to cardinal directions.

The Civil War not only led to massive changes in the appearance of Fort Craig, it may have saved the post from being closed. Rumors were afoot in mid-April of 1860 that the fort was going to be closed,[7] but when Baylor's Texans appeared at El Paso in June 1861, there was no further question about maintaining the post. Fort Fillmore fell on July 26, 1861; Fort Stanton was evacuated the second of August.[8] Those events left Fort Craig in a badly exposed position as the only federally held establishment between the Texas Confederates and Albuquerque, the latter so close to the territorial capital of Santa Fe. Anglos, Mexicans, and Indians started seeing Texans under every bush from the Pecos River to Arizona. It became vitally important to strengthen the defenses at Craig.

Following the Civil War, and in spite of new construction completed in 1868, there were again rumors that Fort Craig would be closed. During the discussion, which was ongoing for about three years, the buildings fell on hard times. Indian troubles revived the importance of Fort Craig, and indeed, Ojo Caliente and Fort Tularosa became subposts of Craig.[9] The twenty-four-year-old post was deactivated in August 1878 and left to fall apart in the wind, snow, and rain—helped along, apparently, by the people of several nearby villages on the east bank of the river and at Milligan's Gulch, about two miles to the south.

Raiding Apaches gave Fort Craig new life. The last regular post return for the first occupation was for August 1878. The first post return for the second occupation was July 1880, but troops were at the fort in May when a telegram was sent from the site.[10] Post returns until November 1880 note that the men were loading and unloading supplies for troops in the field. The men used some of the buildings to shelter themselves, but tents would have been in better condition. It was summertime, fortunately, so gaping windows and doors were not too serious a problem.

The man in command—Capt. John Wesley Bean—had served at Fort Craig in the 1870s as company commander, quartermaster, commissary, adjutant, treasurer, and post commander; at one point he seems to have found that he was writing letters to himself through the chain of command. A native of Vermont, his appointment in the army at the beginning of the Civil War was in a New Hampshire regiment. He was brevetted twice for gallant and meritorious service at Fredericksburg and Cold Harbor. Tenacious and sometimes blunt in official correspondence, he was a good man for the job before him.[11]

December 15, 1880, the post quartermaster wrote that "this post is at present made a point for distributing troops, stores, mules, transportation &c &c." In response to an inquiry in May 1881, it was stated that Fort Craig was "*reoccupied* as a Sub Depot for stores and supplies for troops in the field,

operating against Apache Indians about May 1880. November 1, 1880, the Post was *reestablished* and occupied by a company of Cavalry and a company of Infantry."[12]

The buildings had fallen on hard times while the army was away, and conditions were not improved by a storm in late August that evidently seriously damaged roofs and walls. Authorization was received to repair the damage to quarters and storehouses, and "Paulins [tarpaulins] have been ordered and will be sent you at once . . . ." The latter were necessary to get stores under cover. Allotted to the post for repairs was the princely sum of $958. The amount was quickly overspent by more than $40.

In May 1881, the post commander detailed the condition of the public buildings. Fort Craig had become very much dilapidated, the roofs and walls badly washed, and in some cases they had fallen entirely to the ground. He noted that doors and windows had nearly all been carried away, and the spouting was gone or spoiled. The reestablished Fort Craig lasted until June 30, 1885, when it was finally deactivated as a military establishment. The fort remained in government hands until 1894, when it and the improvements were sold. Snapshots taken in the early 1940s show that many of the walls were still standing, many of them to a respectable height.

The potential for further research into the occupational history of the fort is great. One source would be the records of letters received; another possible avenue lies in seeking out the personal correspondence, files, and memoirs of men and women who lived and worked at the post over nearly thirty years. Not to be overlooked in that context are the civilians who worked at Fort Craig, as well as those who lived nearby and had an often frustrating, sometimes amusing, relationship with the army. Another source of information might be the citizens of the area who grew up knowing the ruins. The remainder of this chapter consists of an area by area compilation of construction and maintenance information.

The Earthworks

Early in July of 1861, the post commander reported that, in anticipation of a Confederate invasion, he had begun fortifying some of the angles and points of Fort Craig with sandbags and loopholing the corrals. Logs were being hauled in for building redoubts, if there was time.[13]

At first, it was the intention of military authorities to garrison Fort Craig with volunteer troops because the regulars were to be withdrawn from the territory for service in the East. With that plan in mind, the commander of the Southern Military District, extended at Fort Craig on August 8, 1861, was ordered to put the post in "a condition for permanent defense as soon as possible." Two weeks

later, in the announcement that the regulars would definitely be withdrawn, the department commander wrote that Fort Union had been entrenched and could be held by 600 or 800 men against a large force, and it was hoped Fort Craig could be put in the same condition.[14] On September 5, word was received at the post that gunny bags would be sent if possible, and on the following day, a letter reached Fort Craig stating that regular troops would not be withdrawn after all. Another letter from department headquarters, dated September 17, referred to lumber requested by the post.[15]

This was the feeble beginning of the massive earthworks that are one of the most interesting features of the ruins of the fort. The designer, no doubt with a great deal of unwanted advice and help, was Lt. Allen Latham Anderson, a native of Ohio, who graduated from West Point in 1859, standing sixteenth out of a class of twenty-two.[16]

By February 1, 1862, the southeast and northwest bastions had been at least partly finished. There were as yet no ditches, but the walls were ten feet high by four feet wide at the bottom. Two weeks earlier, in the first of many orders related to the subject, the men were prohibited from climbing over the walls to prevent damaging them or the loopholes in them.[17]

The following month, after the Battle of Valverde, while Canby followed the Confederate column north, the fort was left in the protection of the New Mexico volunteers under Kit Carson. The deep ditches on the east and west ends of the post were finished, and brush was placed around the bastions. Under Kit Carson's direction, a trench was dug inside the walls in April and the walls were strengthened. Earlier, pickets were posted all around Fort Craig and about 100 of the able wounded had been armed. Also manned and ready to fire were three twelve-pounder howitzers.[18]

Urged on by the department commander, the new post commander promised he would get the other fortifications finished as soon as possible. Soldiers were not the only laborers at work on the fortifications. Civilians were contributing their share of blood, sweat, tears, and money. January 30, the post commander wrote to the *alcalde* (mayor) at Polvadera acknowledging the receipt of a list of citizens from Polvadera and Lemitar who would be working on the project. Exempted were the old and infirm. The *alcalde* was assured that their response to the call for aid was greatly appreciated and "proof of your loyalty to the Government of the United States."[19] A little more than a month later, the post commander wrote the *alcalde* of San Pedro telling that gentleman he expected to see those villagers as soon as their *acequias* (irrigation ditches) were finished. On March 20, the post quartermaster received $31.25 donated by local people toward defraying the expense of building the earthworks. In April 1863, the post adjutant sent a list of individuals who had subscribed money for the works

to the *alcalde* of Socorro, stating that it was now to be collected. When the labor of the enlisted men was suspended (except for general prisoners) on June 3, the Department of New Mexico authorized the use of civilians at 75¢ a day and a ration, plus a ration of whiskey every other day. They did not have to work on Sundays. Citizens of Doña Ana County contributed $167.25 to be used to hire laborers.[20]

With all the civilian help and money, work progressed apace. Spurred on by reports of advancing Texans, the post commander was able to report late in April that the week's work would finish up the south and west sides of the fort. On May 4, a detail was directed to go to the river the following day to cut and make 300 fascines (bundles of sticks) for use in the fortifications. "Mexicans" were still working on them late in July, and at the end of September, the laborers were directed to report to Lieutenant Young to finish the western parapet, which was expected to take a week.[21]

Work continued on the earth bastions until the summer of 1864. Probably as soon as the walls started going up, problems began with foot traffic over them. General Order 7, paragraph I, dated January 31, 1864, prohibited walking on the slopes, "steps having been placed at a convenient place to cross to the rear." A circular early in February directed the new guard posted at the south bastion to arrest anyone crossing the slopes and ditches except at the steps, and General Order 9, dated March 17, 1865, forbade crossing the works except at openings because it would damage the exterior slopes of the earthworks.[22]



Figure 2.3
Work continued on the earth bastions until the summer of 1864.
(National Archives III-SC-87952)

The Storage Facilities

Within the largest bastion of Fort Craig three big storehouses were built during the Civil War to handle the enormous stores it was anticipated would be necessary to fend off another attack by the Texans. This bastion on the southwest corner was obviously planned for the protection of the stores, and along with the storehouses themselves, remains the most impressive feature of the ruins.

The beginning was small. When it became apparent that the Texas forces were serious about taking New Mexico, Albuquerque became the depot for the district, and Fort Craig was made the depot for the troops in the field. Needs were estimated at 2,000 rations a day, but it was not intended to store more than the post could handle. Without increasing the storage space, that was not much.[23]

It is not known exactly when the two large storehouses, one measuring 27 feet by 200 feet, and the other 37 feet by 130 feet, were begun. Writing on June 3, 1863, regarding the inspection of commissary stores, the commanding officer stated that the rooms had been repaired and everything was properly stored. Going on, he reported that "two large storerooms have been erected and are, I think, perfectly watertight," that the roofs were being covered with cement and plaster, and that lumber was needed for flooring. Ground plans show no new buildings for storage of commissary supplies other than the two large storehouses.[24] Supplies were sufficient that summer to issue food to the poor of the county.

Whenever the storehouses were started, they were pretty well finished by the summer of 1864, when the post commander reported that the commissary storehouse still required a "railway and truck," but that the floors of cement were "level and smooth, dry and hard" except for the hall, which was a little rough because of holes left in the cement for crossties. The roofs of both buildings were watertight and in fine condition. Drainage was excellent and not expected to be a problem unless enough water fell to wash away the fort. One building was full of quartermaster stores, the other about one third full of commissary supplies. Less than a month later, the post quartermaster was directed to cover the roofing on the commissary storehouse with a two-inch layer of lime and sand similar to the one on the quartermaster storehouse and to lay the interior railway.[25]

The Bacon House

The original bacon house was immediately north of the stables, along the back row of buildings and corrals, on the east side of the fort. It would appear from three of the ground plans (1854, 1865, 1866) that it was not adequate for the number of rations stored, and certainly a space was reserved for another storehouse in the southwest bastion.

The post commander wrote to department headquarters asking where to build the new bacon house. Apparently, he wanted a quick reply, for he stated that the present location of the bacon house endangered the shops, corrals, and magazine in the event of fire. Before an answer arrived, the Acting Inspector General of the district and the post commander decided to build it between the two commissary storehouses in the bastion, making it 130 feet long by 30 feet wide. The quartermaster was to hire what he needed in the way of labor and get on with it. Work on the third storehouse began in the middle of August 1865.[26] On August 19, the bacon house was reported underway, but it was not built between the other two storehouses. Instead, it was placed to the northwest of them, and just behind the officers' quarters.[27]

During August 1867, heavy rains fell all across the territory and a particularly torrential one fell at Fort Craig. The post quartermaster reported that he could not keep the roofs at the post in repair with just one mason. All had been heavily damaged and part of the roof on the bacon house had collapsed, damaging the stores extensively. The commander well understood the problem and hired two masons and five laborers to do the repairs.[28]

The Annual Inspection Report for 1869, made on July 20, noted that the storehouses were built of wood and adobe and were in good condition. Storehouse No. 3 was being used to store grain.[29] Only indirectly mentioned in the annual inspections for 1872, 1873, and 1875, the storehouses apparently remained in reasonably good condition.

In 1877, the post quartermaster reported that one of the storehouses was in very good condition except for minor roof problems. The walls in the corn house were crumbling but the building was dry. The magazine and bacon house were only fair. The 1878 ground plan, the last one made before abandonment, shows the eastern storehouse in use for storing commissary supplies, the one in the middle as a general storehouse, and the small one still in use for grain storage.

Undoubtedly, these three substantial buildings had something to do with the decision to reoccupy Fort Craig in 1880.

The storehouses were quaintly noted in the 1883 inspection as having been "originally built as bomb-proof in the old Fort." The floors were described as being cement 10 feet below ground. The buildings are described as "spacious, well ventilated, and cool in summer," but the roofs were prone to leak during the rainy season. Recommended for all three were shingle roofs, the total cost of which would have exceeded $2,200. The 1882 inspection had noted a fallen wall in the small storehouse that left the northwest wall of the building unsafe. No repairs were noted as being required in 1883, so this problem was apparently fixed during the year. All three received a good rating in 1884. The center storehouse had acquired a dividing wall during the year; part of it was devoted

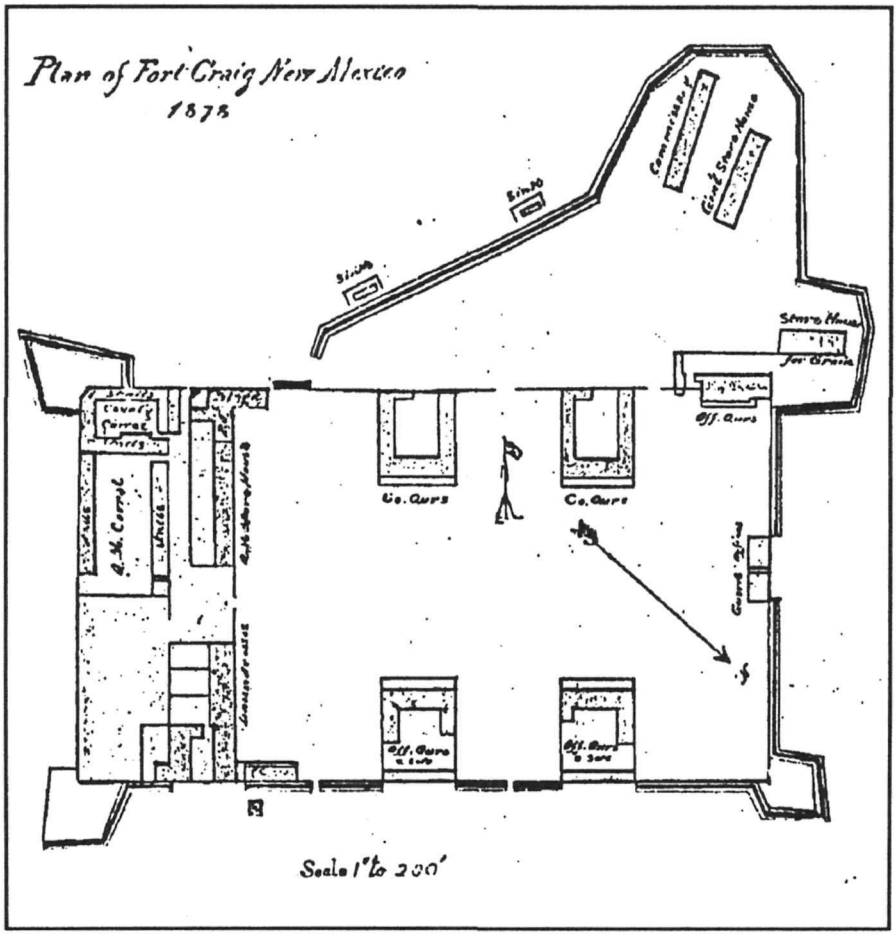


Figure 2.4
1878 ground plan of Fort Craig.

to ordnance storage (the magazine) and part to quartermaster supplies. The 1885 inspection reported all three in good condition.

The Magazine

The magazine was originally in a small building with a cellar off the rear (east) hospital yard. For several years, until 1873 when it disappeared from the ground plans, it is called a cellar on maps of the fort.

Early in 1863, the magazine was moved from its previously exposed position. Construction of a new building in the center of the parade ground had begun the year before, and by late April 1863, Captain Anderson was informed that supplies were being moved into the "new magazine." A few days later, the post commander reported that it was full even though the roof still had to be plastered and some exterior finishing was required. Invoices for lightning rods were received in June and the rods may have been for this building.[30]

The magazine was not immune to the never-ending roof problems suffered around the post. A letter to district headquarters the following summer related that the recent heavy rains had "broken up and blown off the cement coating." The commanding officer thought the original plan had been defective and believed the coating should not have been placed directly on the earthen roof. Evidently this or other damage was sustained in April 1865, as the post quartermaster was directed to proceed with repairs to other buildings once those to the magazine were finished.[31]

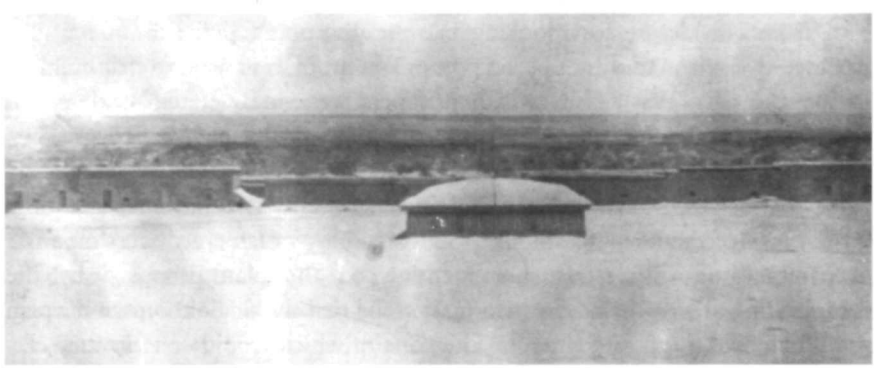


Figure 2.5
Quartermaster buildings and magazine
(National Archives III-SC-87959)

Underlining the fact that storage capacity was short in spite of the two new storehouses, two letters in 1865 refer to several thousand pounds of beans being stored in the magazine.[32]

Another problem surfaced two years later when the post quartermaster requested 1,500 feet of lumber to board up the inside. The walls were described as being "of large logs placed upright 2½ or 3 feet thickness of earth outside. The chinks . . . were filled with small sticks and bark . . ." which were falling out, letting large amounts of earth in. The post commander concurred in the assessment and recommended the request be approved.[33]

By 1866, the necessity for keeping the ammunition protected in the middle of the parade ground had long passed. Reporting in December 1866, the post commander said the magazine measured forty-one feet by twenty-seven feet, with the floor three feet below ground, and that it was well ventilated. The only objection to it was that it was in the center of the parade ground.[34]

Col. William B. Hazen, commanding Fort Craig in May 1868, was far more blunt, calling the building "dangerous and unsightly" and no longer necessary. As it was a temporary building, he believed he needed no authority for removing it, which he was doing, and would continue to do so unless he got orders to stop.[35] Although all evidence of the building is gone, the site of the building may very well be found beneath the surface without too much trouble.

The Gate and Guardhouse

In the center of the west exterior wall of the fort was the main gate, or "sally port," and two small adobe buildings, shown on the early ground plans (1854, 1865, and 1866) as the "guard house" or "guard rooms." Looking toward the east (from outside the fort, looking in), the one on the left side of the gate included two prison rooms. A picket post prison room was added to that building during the Civil War when civilian prisoners were incarcerated at the post, creating a critical lack of room.[36] Relief was on the way by late May 1863, when a detail was ordered to the *bosque* (riverine woodlands) across the river to cut sixty *vigas* (roof beams) twelve feet long, and one *viga* twenty-two and a half feet long, for the roof of the new guardhouse.[37] Less than a year later, a discussion arose over rebuilding with stone. Commenting on the plan proposed by the commanding officer, the post quartermaster said that the single room on the plan should be broken up into three or four, one of which would contain the cells. The commander agreed and suggested that ventilation be by skylight as well as from holes over the doors or under the roof eaves. He was opposed to using prisoners for labor as they were useless where skill and judgment were necessary. Department headquarters agreed with the post quartermaster on the design, but insisted the construction be done by prisoners.[38]

Whether or not the stone building that can be seen today in ruins at the front gate was actually begun at that time remains problematical. The 1866 ground plan still shows a picket post addition, which is not shown on the ca. 1869 plan, but the quartermaster's inspection for 1875 reported that a stone prison room had recently been completed.

Probably during 1876, the building became the only one devoted to holding prisoners. The capacity was twenty, and the floor of cobblestones was taken up that year, although no new flooring was laid. The inspection by the post quartermaster noted the "rough casting" was badly damaged by rain and the woodwork was rapidly decaying.

The building on the south side of the sally port was also devoted to the functions of the guard, the 1865 plan listing from north to south a guard room, prison room, and office of the guard. The prison room had only a dirt floor, which was sprinkled to keep the dust down, and on this the prisoners slept. It was below the guard room that the infamous underground cells lay, reached by a trap door and stairway in one corner of the upper room. The only ventilation admitted to the cells was by eight auger holes and chinks around the doors. The trap door was closed at night, thus shutting off that source of air.[39]

As the years passed, the two buildings apparently received no major repairs until 1872. The Annual Inspection Report for 1869 found the guardhouse to be in very poor condition. In 1873, the post quartermaster reported in his yearly inspection that the guardhouse was in good condition, having been recently repaired.[40]

Sometime between the 1875 inspection report and the one made July 21, 1877, the south building was made into offices for the commanding officer, adjutant, quartermaster, and subsistence officer and was called the administration building. The condition at that point was fair, the outer walls having been damaged by rain. The roof was of mud, the floors of *jaspe* (gypsum), and the post quartermaster thought that board floors should be substituted.

Only the annual inspection reports give any later information about the two buildings on either side of the sally port. The 1883 report called the building on the south the commanding officer's office, included remarks that the condition of the walls and mud roof was poor, and recommended a shingle roof. The guardhouse, noted as having adobe walls, earned the same assessment and recommendations. Undoubtedly, these structures had been floored, as reported in the 1882 inspection. The commanding officer's office was in fair condition in 1884 and had been roofed with shingles. Noted as being needed was a porch, for which materials were on hand; troop labor would put it up. Across the road, the guardhouse was listed as being in good condition; a shingle roof, new floor, and porch had been added during the year. The printed form for 1885 stated the

guardhouse was built of adobe (which the two front rooms were, but the prison room was stone) and was in good condition.

Housing

Prior to the Civil War, there are few documents related to maintenance or use of the quarters at Fort Craig except for infrequent complaints about needed minor repairs. Lydia Lane commented in late September 1856 with some humor about the wife of a commanding officer having to receive visits while sitting under an umbrella in her sick bed, but that was only the beginning of continuous problems with the roofs over the next twenty-four years. A post surgeon requested his fireplace be repaired in March 1861. And there was the case of quarters crunch when Joseph Wheeler brought Company A of the Mounted Rifles into the garrison in October 1860. He had to take quarters for his company in two rooms at the northeast side of the parade ground which at the time were sheltering two laundresses.[41]

Commanding Officer's Quarters

The ruin south of the sally port, which still has standing masonry walls today, was simply called "officers' quarters" on the 1854, 1865, and 1866 ground plans, and it is shown on those plans as having a picket post fence on the north side. An addition to this building, and its first designation as the commanding officer's quarters, appear on the ca. 1869 plan. The only reference to it prior to that map is in two endorsements, one of which notes the additional rooms were built up to the window sills.[42]

Like the two other sets of officers' quarters, the rooms in the commanding officer's quarters were described as having gypsum *(jaspe)* floors and roofs. This building was heated by open fireplaces and had plenty of windows. The privy was in a small building in the rear of the quarters.[43]

The Annual Inspection of the Post on July 20, 1869, noted the building was of stone and adobe and referred to it as new. The report on the hygiene of the army published in 1875 includes a diagram of the quarters showing the five rooms that were added in 1867 on the south and west sides of the original building, along with a veranda on the north side.[44]

The commanding officer's quarters were floored by the time of the 1882 inspection, and no particular mention of their condition was made. Plans and estimates for roofing with "corrugated iron" had been sent forward.

In March 1882, the commanding officer complained that the location of the quarters "is very objectionable, as it has all the storehouses close behind it, and one set of enlisted men's quarters within less than 50 yards." The parapet limited the view to the parade ground and interior of the garrison in front; in the rear

the view was blocked by the storehouses and enlisted men's sinks (latrines), one of which was within 100 yards of his dining room. He thought a new set of officers' quarters across the parade ground would free the objectionable building for use as a barracks, but that did not happen.[45]

The corrugated iron roof was on by the time of the 1883 inspection, but the condition of the quarters was reported as poor. It needed a new porch, replastering, and general repairs. The building was upgraded to fair in 1884. A new porch and fence and, interestingly enough, a water closet had been added. Still needed were new floors for two rooms, painting, and whitewashing. In 1885, the condition of this building was listed as good.

Enlisted Quarters

East of the commanding officer's quarters, on the south wall, were the two large sets of enlisted quarters. Substantially built of adobe, they each measured 150 feet across the front with two wings of 130 feet by 20 feet. Rooms on the east side of the eastern set of quarters were used to store ordnance supplies. Also on that side, the 1854 ground plan shows an extension of one of the rooms. No other plan shows this, but on the ground, there are large lava rocks dressed for building. This area of the ruins of the fort has been destroyed by artifact hunters, so the purpose of this extension may never be known. Also in this eastern set of quarters, the 1865 plan shows a bake house, the only one shown, in the west wing.

When changes were made at the post at the beginning of the Civil War, a third set of enlisted quarters was built of picket posts between the two original sets. Nothing in the records indicates the date that the building was raised, nor is there anything to indicate when it was torn down. A possible clue to the date of the erection of the building appears in a February 1863 letter requesting Sibley tents to house three companies because building "even temporary quarters" would take too much time from work on the fortifications.[46] Photographs taken during or immediately after the war years show the picket post quarters standing (see Figure 2.1).

There are two references in the Fort Craig documents to the official photographer. On July 23, 1865, the post quartermaster was directed to furnish a team and wagon "to Mr. Gage the Artist." The second reference is in a letter from the post quartermaster dated February 28, 1878, in which he forwarded a ground plan and apologized for not sending the required photographs as there was no person in the area to take them. He reported, however, that the post had been thoroughly and completely photographed under General Order No. 3, from the quartermaster general, dated January 21, 1864.[47]

The unofficial photographer was William I. Bell, who was attached to a railroad survey. He visited Fort Craig from October 6 to October 8, 1867, and mentioned taking several views.

The picket post set of enlisted quarters had disappeared from the ground plans by the time of the plan dated ca. 1869, and it may have been torn down in 1868, when the magazine was dismantled. New buildings were started that year in a general tidying up of post construction. In the days of bedbug-infested barracks, the old picket post structure was surely not missed; its absence may even have kept the vermin population down in the adjoining buildings.

The two adobe barracks buildings underwent periodic repairs. Early in May of 1868, one company was ordered into tents near the post, and all of the men available for duty were put to work on renovating their quarters inside and out. The other company was allowed to remain in the building while the troops repaired it.[48]

The post inspection for 1869 noted that the condition of the two buildings was still poor, but the *placitas* (interior yards) could house 250 men in a pinch. The report on barracks and hospitals noted that the buildings were poorly designed, lacking in ventilation, and could not be properly heated. The kitchens in the rear, however, were well floored, with stoves and open fireplaces for cooking.[49]

Unfortunately, a combination of factors contributed to the further, almost irreversible deterioration of the enlisted quarters and other buildings at Fort Craig at this time. In December 1869, word was received that it was probable the post would be abandoned the following spring, so only the work that could be done by one mason and the troops would be authorized. Spring arrived but no word came to abandon the fort. Summer came and the post commander reported that all repair work would have to stop if additional material was not forwarded. A year passed, the spring of 1871 blew in, and the question of deactivating the fort was still not resolved, so any funds that might have been earmarked for Fort Craig went to posts that were definitely going to be retained in service.[50]

Struggling to keep the leaking roofs from damaging everything under them, the post quartermaster must have found something to smile about in an exchange between the Quartermaster General in Washington who asked what *jaspe* was, "a kind of lime or some vegetable substance or hair to mix with mortar. I never saw the word before," and the chief quartermaster of the District of New Mexico who gamely replied that it was "a species of [lined out and illegible] rock (sulfate of lime) *peculiar to this* country. It is not ordinary Plaster of Paris, as in this case, intended for same purpose. It is used for roofing . . . also for flooring—but not to my knowledge for hard finish like '*Geso*' which seems to be prepared from another variety of [lined out and illegible] rock, and is like Plaster of Paris. *Jaspe* is burned in a kiln like lime. The name '*Jaspe*' is probably incorrect. *Jaspe* is a Spanish term for Jasper."[51]

In February 1870, the post commander wrote that with one company gone, the time was right for an "immediate and thorough repair" before the quarters were again occupied.

October of 1871 found the walls and roofs of the enlisted quarters still needing repair, but an inspector found everything on the post in bad condition as the funds the post had been getting were only good "for a patch job." The roofs needed to be replaced, and he estimated it would cost $6,000 to $8,000 for a proper repair job on all the public buildings at Fort Craig. He wrote, "I do not think the necessity for Fort Craig justifies the expense of its repair and retention—further than its temporary occupation the ensuing winter."[52]

Fort Craig was not alone in losing funds, for the appropriated money ran out armywide in 1873, a fact reflected in a letter from the Adjutant General in March which directed that all repairs and construction be stopped for the year and that all civilians be discharged. Even the enlisted men were to be relieved from such duty. The same state of affairs occurred in 1874.

In spite of the lack of funds, the 1873 annual report stated that the roofs and floors of the enlisted quarters were in good condition, having been recently repaired, but that the walls were in very bad condition.

The estimates for these repairs were submitted in 1874, but before approval was received, the waters of the Rio Grande went on such a rampage that it was believed in Washington that Fort Craig had been washed away or at least cut off. The Quartermaster General asked for clarification; the request came down through channels to Fort Craig where the post quartermaster reported there was no damage in an answer sent back through channels to Washington. This exchange occupied three months, during which time Fort Craig sagged even further owing to summer rains. Finally, approval for the desperately needed money was granted by the Quartermaster General.[53]

Submitting an estimate for repairs in late June 1874, the post quartermaster noted that the barracks were in very poor condition and work would have to start again in the next fiscal year if the post was to be maintained in good condition.[54]

The inspection of the public buildings for 1877 noted the same need for roof repairs, recommending that shingle roofs be added to all quarters in place of the ones of mud. Additionally, the *jaspe* floors in the barracks were all described as broken and defective.

Between October 1876 and April 1877, three companies were stationed at Fort Craig, necessitating alterations to the "lower" quarters. Two rooms on each side of the two halls were joined, thus creating three sets instead of two. Frame kitchens were built in the yards. The 1878 ground plan does not reflect this arrangement, but the kitchens were probably torn down once the need for them had passed.

Extracts from the 1878 report note the roof problem and recommend shingles again. Also recommended was some device to put out fires, as well as the age-old wish for board floors, especially in the barracks. The endorsement from the Department of the Missouri bluntly stated, "The removal of the Indians has deprived *Fort McRae* and *Fort Craig* of any military importance. They are used now simply as shelters for troops . . . ."

When the subpost of Ojo Caliente was about to be abandoned in the fall of 1882, it became necessary to make room for the troops at Fort Craig. It was decided to build an addition onto the existing quarters. After some discussion, this addition ended up being built between the two older buildings on the site of the Civil War picket post quarters. At the end of September, the post commander pointed out that it was getting late in the year and requested permission to begin making adobes, even though he thought that concrete would be a better building material. Construction started about September 25 and moved along fairly well. On December 28, doors were cut into the walls of the old east set of enlisted quarters to allow access to what would become the new mess room and kitchen for the incoming troops.[55]

Officers' Quarters

The officers' quarters on the north wall were in two adobe buildings, measuring 130 feet by 110 feet each, and were lined up precisely across the parade ground from the enlisted quarters. They were divided into four sets (two per building) by a wall that gave some privacy to the occupants' yards. The small rooms along the back were used for quarters except for one on the east side of the east set, which was used for ordnance stores. A room on the south side of this same building was also devoted to ordnance storage in 1866.

The set of quarters on the west side of the western set was the commanding officer's quarters through 1866, according to the ground plans, and probably remained so until the improvements to the set in the southwest corner were completed in 1868.

The officers' roofs were among those that received heavy damage during the August 1867 storm. In plastering and whitewashing the walls during roof repairs, the post quartermaster found heavy damage from the torrential rain and recommended immediate repair.[56]

The unending roof problems plagued the officers' quarters throughout the life of the post. Beset by sagging *vigas* and crumbling walls in 1868, the post commander asked for authority to buy shingles to roof both the officers' and enlisted quarters, as the existing roofs were leaking badly and were dangerous and unhealthy. The cost would run about $8.00 per thousand. The request went to the chief quartermaster, who returned it to the Fort Craig quartermaster for



Figure 2.6
Officers' quarters ca. 1866
(National Archives)

more specific prices. He replied that shingles could be purchased locally for $9.50 per thousand, if more than 400,000 were ordered, or for $10.00 per thousand for fewer than 400,000. The cost of delivery would be minimal. The acting chief quartermaster at district headquarters thought the earth roofs should be removed first and asked for a detailed estimate from Fort Craig. Writing on October 13, the new post commander replied that he did not think the walls would stand the weight of a shingle roof, and reported that most of the existing roofs would have to be removed because of weak *vigas* and rotten boards. With 300 *vigas* twenty-five feet long, 200 *vigas* eighteen feet long (all eight inches at the top), and 2,000 bushels of lime, he thought the roofs could be redone where necessary and covered with lime and sand. He proposed that with those repairs, the roofs would last many years without attention.[57]

In June, the post commander reported that since December of 1869, the roofs had been rebuilt around the post, replacing dirt with 33,970 square feet of *jaspe*. More was needed to finish up the quarters and storerooms, and he believed that the repairs would last at least five years. On April Fool's Day 1871, he had to report that the heavy winds that began March 15 had destroyed almost all the roofs, which "are now utterly worthless, not even as good as common earth."[58]

The 1877 inspection revealed that the "upper" officers' quarters had a leaky roof but it had been repaired and was considered in fair condition. The outhouses were dilapidated and the woodwork decaying. Part of the "lower" quarters walls

was giving way and would be unsafe before much time passed. The outhouses were so damaged by rain they were hardly fit for use.

The arrival of the second cavalry troop from Ojo Caliente in the winter of 1882 created a pinch in housing for the officers. The 1883 inspection reported that rooms in hospital row were in use as temporary officers' quarters and that they were in poor condition.

Early in 1883, an irate exchange took place between a lieutenant forced to occupy one of the temporary quarters with his family and the beleaguered quartermaster. It may have started early in March when the quartermaster was ordered to do some necessary work but not to cut an extra door in some unspecified rooms. On March 25, the quartermaster was told to cut a door in "these quarters" when he could. The poor man replied that the last he heard the lieutenant decided on an iron bar, which the blacksmith put up, and a curtain. But a few days later, he learned the lieutenant considered that temporary and wanted the door yesterday. The quartermaster had told him he would get to it when he could as he did not intend to let anything interfere with the construction of the new blacksmith shop. The post commander agreed, and the lieutenant ended up taking his turn.[59]

Reoccupation found the previously ailing officers' quarters in sad condition. Ceilings of two rooms in each of the two sets were in danger of falling because the *vigas* were cracked or broken. Floor to ceiling posts supported the aged timbers. Both sets, however, had been floored; the east set was not quite finished at the time of the 1882 inspection. The partly collapsed walls of a kitchen in this set had been taken down and rebuilt. The roof of a kitchen in the other set had been removed and replaced with more mud.

In March 1882, the post commander thought it was not feasible to lathe and replaster ceilings because the *vigas* were too sprung from the accumulated weight of mud; first, the roofs would have to be removed. Early in May, the post quartermaster forwarded estimates for 150 yards of "heavy cotton sheeting 2 yards wide" to use on the ceilings of the barracks and quarters. The post saddler and a helper started placing cloth ceilings in the officers' quarters late in July to keep dirt from sifting into the rooms. The process was still going on in November using 300 more yards of sheeting. The post commander urged the chief quartermaster, District of New Mexico, not to buy sheeting in New Mexico, where the price was high, but instead to get it at Leavenworth, where it was bleached and only ten cents a yard. A month later, an endorsement asking that the sheeting be supplied at once because of continuing dirt showers crossed one announcing that it was on the way.[60]

The post quartermaster's 1883 inspection found the west set of officers' quarters in poor condition, but it had received a new iron roof. Still needed was a new porch and general repairs. The same state of affairs existed in the other set.[61]

Support Facilities

The post bakery, if that was what existed in the east set of enlisted quarters, was moved to the enlisted quarters on the west in May 1868, where it would remain for the life of the post.[62] Evidently the kitchen in the east ell of the western set of enlisted quarters was enlarged to accommodate an oven and the work space necessary to handle post needs.

In the 1870s, there was some difficulty involved in keeping the bakery functioning. Baking came to an abrupt halt in November 1872, when the oven fell in. While waiting for it to be rebuilt, bread had to be bought off post. Between October 1873 and January 1874, there was no designated post bakery, but the bread was baked by a company baker until the oven was repaired. Another reference to this situation came in November 1876, when the post adjutant directed a company commander to turn over all property drawn for use in the post bakery to the chief baker.

Sutler's row—never so called in the documents—was anchored on the south by a large building used by the post trader until he moved outside the walls. The date of that event does not appear in the records, but the move had taken place by ca. 1869 because the ground plan for that year indicates that the building was then being used for quartermaster storage. Next to this building, proceeding north, were the clothing stores, occupying three rooms, and the picket post blacksmith and carpenter shops, according to the 1854 and 1866 ground plans. The plan for 1865 shows quartermaster stores, a whiskey room, camp and garrison equipage storage, then the clothing stores in two rooms, and the blacksmith and carpenter shops. This plan includes two additional rooms, which may indicate the partitioning of some of the earlier rooms. At various times rooms were used for a chapel (1868) and as quarters for the surgeon and quartermaster (1863).

The picket post buildings stood throughout the Civil War and possibly, on this side of the fort, until 1867. The following May, documents record an exchange between the post quartermaster and the chief quartermaster in which the amount of transportation available for use in hauling stone for the new buildings on the post was discussed.[63] Other than this reference, which may not apply, there is no date for the construction of the new stone blacksmith and carpenter shops, the ruins of which are visible at the site today.

Until September 1873, the records are silent in regard to these various support facilities. In that month, an endorsement on a board of survey held in

August reveals that quartermaster stores were still being kept in small rooms in sutler's row, widely separated from the large storehouses in the southwest bastion.[64]

About a week later, the post commander reported a nearly disastrous fire that started in the stone blacksmith shop at 3:00 A.M. on September 22. Firefighters had not been able to enter either the blacksmith shop or the storeroom next to it and had struggled with the limited water supply at hand to keep the fire from spreading to the other storerooms. Evidently, the carpenter shop had moved into a building directly across the driveway by this time, and it is shown in that location on the 1873 ground plan. Lost in the fire were all the blacksmith's tools and some quartermaster stores. Also lost was 10,000 rounds of ammunition.[65] For many years and until quite recently, it was possible to see exploded shell casings around the ruins of this building. The 1869 inspection by the post quartermaster noted that both the blacksmith and carpenter shops were new and built of stone.

Behind sutler's row and across a driveway wide enough to admit wagons were two sets of stables; the set on the south was devoted to cavalry animals and the one on the north to quartermaster animals. Between them were rooms used as quarters as well as a quartermaster storeroom. On the east side of the cavalry stable was a row of rooms used for quartermaster stores and one for the saddler.

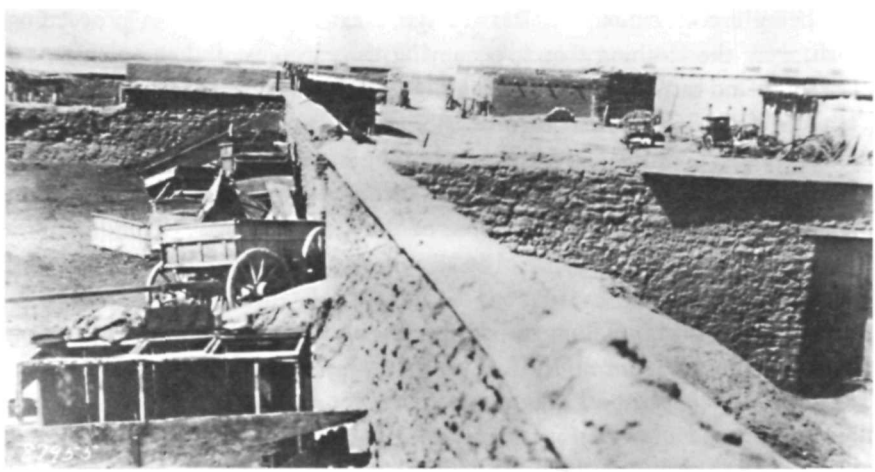


Figure 2.7
Fort Craig corrals mid–1860s.
(National Archives #87955; also Museum of New Mexico neg# 1675)

North of the quartermaster stable was the original bacon house with its small reservoir in the rear of the building for melted grease; east of the quartermaster stable was a forage house which does not appear on the ca. 1869 plan.

Before the completion of the new bacon house in the southwest bastion, the post commander reported that the bacon was kept in an adobe storeroom with a *jaspe* floor and a gutter to drain the grease off to the lined adobe tank in the rear. The capacity of the tank was 12,000 gallons, which may seem high until the heat of summer is considered. The bacon was packed clear of the walls and floors. Willows and brush covered the roof and walls, except for the front, which was covered partly with green branches.[66] The building is not shown on the 1873 plan and was probably torn down when the new carpenter shop was built.

In December 1864, the post quartermaster was directed to build "proper mangers" in the stables of two-inch plank covered with hoop iron "all nailed down" or rawhide in lieu of the iron should that not be on hand. Up to but no more than 2,000 feet of lumber was authorized for the project.[67]

Four years later, the quartermaster was ordered to furnish lumber to build stalls in the cavalry stable. The roofs were weak and posts of the new stalls would act as supports. The posts themselves were to be reused scantling from the bacon house.[68]

The post quartermaster reported the stables in poor condition in 1869, but both had new roofs. The stable for the quartermaster housed fifty-eight animals; the cavalry stable could shelter sixty-five.

Three years later, the inspector general noted that the corrals and stables were in bad condition. Reporting in 1873, the post quartermaster found everything, including the feed troughs, very old and dilapidated.

The old sutler's row was used for quartermaster and commissary storage and offices during the 1880s. It was not specifically noted in the 1882 inspection report, but the following year the building was rated as poor and a shingle roof in place of a mud one was on the wish list. In the row that year, according to the post quartermaster, was the telegraph office, the post library, and the carpenter shop. The last report listed everything in this row as being in good condition.

The corrals and stables suffered severely during the years the post was unoccupied. The 1882 inspection found them badly dilapidated and unfit for use.

In the summer of 1882, work was begun on rearranging the stables and corrals to make room for the second cavalry troop. The old stable and its north row of rooms were not moved, but the former quartermaster corral, as shown on the 1878 ground plan, was shortened to make the new cavalry stable. Back to back with it was the new quartermaster corral, the north end of which extended past the south end of hospital row. Three weeks later, the post commander reported all the stables finished.[69]

The 1883 inspection found the new stable in good condition, reporting that the stable had been built during the year. The stable at the old site was in fair condition, and like the new one, had the capacity for one troop's horses. The quartermaster corral had adobe walls and a board roof and was considered in fair condition. It could handle sixty animals.

Early in 1883, the post commander complained that the blacksmith shop at the 1870s location was too small to handle two cavalry troops, so the horseshoeing was being done outdoors. The fires were endangering the new stable, and of course, a new shop was desired. Apparently authority was given quickly because on January 25, orders were issued to get the rafters for the new shop, which was built outside the rear of the garrison.[70]

Hospital row was anchored on the north by the hospital, which for the life of the post always included the surgery and dispensary. The row of rooms south of the hospital changed more in function and appearance over the years than any other structures on the post.

In the five rooms adjoining the hospital were commissary and quartermaster offices that moved around among the rooms between 1854 and 1866. Between four of the offices and the picket post building that housed quartermaster supplies, the 1865 ground plan shows a butcher shop and a cellar. The cellar is not shown on the 1866 plan, but that location is designated as the commissary's, a related function.

The rooms at the south end of hospital row were used, at least until the 1882 inspection at the end of March, for the quartermaster, commissary, and telegraph offices, a subsistence sales room, and a library. Six of the rooms were being used for noncommissioned staff quarters. All of them had been floored during the year. The site of the telegraph office was assigned June 24, 1883, to two rooms next to the hospital; these rooms were in use at the time of the assignment as officers' quarters. When the telegraph office moved to sutler's row, if indeed it did, is not known.[71]

The hospital consisted of a double row of buildings separated by a *placita*. On the east side of that was another yard, with the original magazine at the southwest corner and a privy in the opposite corner. The hospital was adequate for the needs of the post until the Battle of Valverde, when the wounded were scattered in rooms all over the post in spite of the sutler's store being set up to handle the overflow.[72]

A year later, in 1863, beds for the sick were still in critically short supply, so the surgeon moved the matrons into tents, turning their rooms into two new wards. He also wished for a new privy away from the wards. The post commander thought additional space could be gained by moving ordnance



Figure 2.8
Old hospital and hospital row ca. 1865–1868.
(National Archives)

stores out of two rooms next door to the hospital, but this could only be done when the new magazine was completed.[73]

Still seeking additional room in July, the post commander forwarded plans and estimates for a new hospital that he figured would not cost much aside from lumber.

Thirteen years later, in March 1876, the post surgeon requested that the appropriated funds be spent on finishing the new hospital, indicating that there were things yet undone. The post quartermaster recommended that the money be spent at once if Fort Craig was going to be maintained, as only four months remained in the fiscal year. He added that if deactivation was immminent, the funds should be transferred to another post. Fort Craig was directed to repair the hospital.[74]

The Annual Inspection Report for 1877 noted that the new hospital had been finished two years previously. The mud roof had leaked so badly that it was replaced with one of "mortar," and the capacity was reported as being twelve beds in two wards. The old hospital was in fair condition except that it needed "rough-casting" and the chimneys needed repair. Finally, in May 1878, shortly before temporary abandonment, no repairs or alterations were noted as being required for either building.[75]

The annual inspection of 1883 by the post quartermaster reported the completion of a bath house just north of the new hospital and the addition of a dead house and outhouse to the north end of the old hospital, thus breaching the old garrison rectangle.

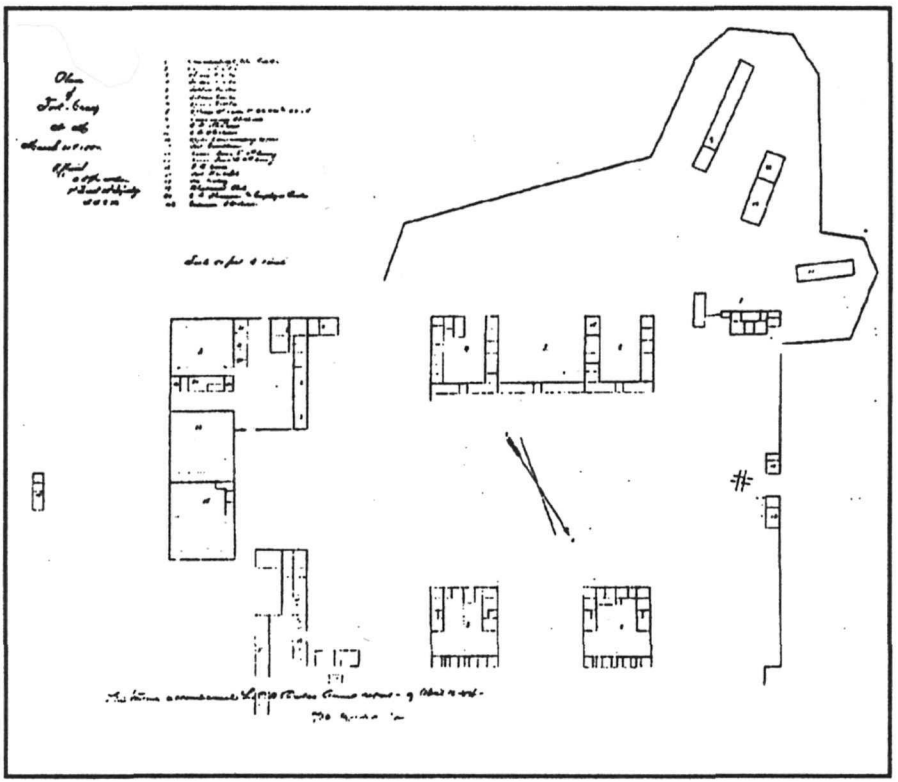


Figure 2.9
1884 plan of Fort Craig.

A few days before the 1884 annual report, the commanding officer examined the building and found the walls in good condition; if funds were appropriated for the needed repairs, it would be "one of the very best" hospitals in New Mexico. He considered it roomy, well ventilated, and well arranged. Very possibly, he was referring only to the new hospital. The quartermaster was not quite so smitten when he inspected the facility on April 12. He found the building in fair shape. A shingle roof was in place over the wards and a picket fence had been placed around them. The 1885 report noted the hospital's condition as good.[76]

The Parade Ground

During the early occupation of Fort Craig the parade ground came in for its share of attention. On it, the initial point of the Fort Craig Military Reservation was a square stone twenty feet east of the flagstaff which, in 1869, the year the reservation was surveyed, was in front of the south building at the sally port. It is marked on all maps in different ways.

Needing a new flagstaff in 1868, the post commander appealed to district headquarters for permission to move the one at Albuquerque, which he understood belonged to the United States. He was informed a few days later that the flagstaff at Albuquerque had been put up during the Civil War and was made a gift to the people when the troops left. About a year later, in September 1869, the new flagstaff was authorized for Fort Craig as long as it did not cost more than $150. The 1878 ground plan shows it in front of and between the two enlisted quarters.[77]

Rumors also exist about a sundial in front of the buildings at the sally port; this object was reportedly still in place as late as the early 1940s.

There were orders requiring people to keep to the walkways and refrain from cutting through buildings, particularly the offices on the east side of the fort. The commanding officer referred to roads running around the parade ground and gave instructions to the quartermaster to keep his men from riding or driving anywhere else. In the fall of 1869, wagons were stopped from using the sally port, but pleasure carriages could pass through it.[78]

Care of the parade ground changed with each commanding officer and reflected his notions of "neat." Under the command of Kit Carson, it accumulated a noticeable amount of rags and "dirt," but a commander in 1868 wanted it "neatly swept" every day.[79]

The scraggly little trees shown around the perimeter of the parade ground in several contemporary photographs (see Figure 2.1) would, had they grown, have provided welcome shade and a degree of beauty. Unfortunately, they never had a chance. A general order in the spring of 1865 prohibited the garrison from

tying horses to the trees and strictly prohibited animals from gnawing or chewing on them. The folks of the fort were urged to "use every precaution to prevent any further mutilation of the trees . . . ." The commander addressed the post quartermaster in stinging language in July 1867, telling him the trees were suffering severely from lack of attention. The quartermaster shot back, "Indeed, Sir, the trees need immediate attention." He had previously tried to interest the post adjutant in bringing the plight of the trees to the commanding officer's attention, but had failed. If prisoners were supplied for the labor, he would provide the tools to break up the ground around the trees so water would not run off. A year or so later, it is noted that the waste water from the washrooms, kitchens, and laundresses was to be used to water the hapless trees, but the lye from the soaps probably did more harm than the water did good.[80]

Sanitary Facilities

Not directly related to the parade ground but a part, nevertheless, of the environment were the ditches surrounding the post. Most trash was hauled off to the bluff after the Civil War, but an order from November 1869 directs that ashes and "police" be discarded into the holes in the ditches surrounding the post. This is certainly an indication that the importance of the earthworks had lessened.[81]

Another concern of the post commander and quartermaster was the "sinks" or privies. There are several orders related to this necessity. One, in August 1863, detailed men to dig the vaults from fifteen to twenty feet deep. Those particular sinks were covered with brush or willows, and the completion of them was so important that work was not to stop until they were finished.[82]

The post commander complained the following June that there were no sinks for the men so they committed "nuisances" in all directions outside the south wall "presenting a most revolting sight." Nothing was said about the health hazard. He ordered the construction of three privies, but in poking around the files, he found a plan for one. It could not be moved if it was built of adobe. Three were settled on as it gave one to each company. Apparently, he had not found the order issued earlier in the month that directed the digging of three sinks for the enlisted men, each to measure three feet wide by twenty feet long and six feet deep. The labor was to be performed by prisoners. The sinks were to be placed on a nearly parallel line with the southern wall and not less than 150 feet outside it, with the earth from the excavations being thrown to the north. The post quartermaster was directed to furnish the necessary lumber to complete them.[83]

A circular of 1877 directed the company commanders to have the sink vaults covered with dry earth at least twice a week, and when it became possible, new ones would be built outside the walls and use of the old ones discontinued.[84]

Another subject of interest to the garrison was the water supply. Everybody tried to come up with a plan that would be an improvement over the awful stuff from the Rio Grande. In 1865, some arrangement called the waterworks was supposed to be finished without delay, but owing to the dismissal of all but two carpenters, it was not possible, according to the post commander. A few days later, it was reported that water was so high in the river that the channel was changing. The river had cut into the bluff under one pump, causing the ground to give way beneath the animals who were working it. One horse fell in the river, ending up on an island opposite the fort, and it was expected it would be lost. Fifty feet of the bluff was gone, 100 more would probably be lost, but it was thought the pump could be saved. With the channel changing, the pump would be left "high & dry." The waterworks again came up in mid-August, when the receipt of a report on it was acknowledged.[85]

Orders in August and September sent men to the "bend" of the river above the waterworks to cut a ditch through a sand bar to lead the water from the river to a pump. Men were ordered also to labor at the waterworks as carpenters. The ditch was to be dug from the bend of the river "to and past the well that furnished the post with good and wholesome water." In the middle of September, the men were relieved from these duties and returned to their companies.[86]

The water supply was the subject of a reply to an inquiry from district headquarters a year later. The post commander thought the best and cheapest way to supply Fort Craig with water was to dig a well inside the walls in front of the bacon house, presumably the old one. From there, water could be conducted to any part of the fort. He thought it could be dug and lined with stone in two months' time for $1,200.[87]

Another wonderful plan was to run an *acequia* from the mountains to the post, which would provide a stream four feet wide and eighteen inches deep that would be good for five years. The ditch would be brought to a point 400 yards west of the flagstaff.[88]

Early in February 1883, water was being delivered to barrels by a water wagon. In December it was reported by the post quartermaster that Fort Craig was still being supplied "with well water by means of a water wagon." The quantity from the well was virtually inexhaustible, but what could be delivered was limited. An ordinary hand pump was used to fill the wagon so "machinery connections for supplying water to the post" was requisitioned in November. The site of the well is not known at present.[89] •

Notes

1. An exception is David Clary, *These Relics of Barbarism: A History of Furniture in Barracks and Guardhouses of the United States Army, 1800–1880* (Harper's Ferry, West Virginia: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, n.d.)

2. "Quartermaster General Consolidated File," containing letters received by the post quartermaster (1882), letters sent by the post subsistence officer (1862), and letters sent by the Fort Marcy post quartermaster (1865–1867), Records of the War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General, Record Group 92, National Archives (RG, NA).
3. Endorsement of 29 September 1883 on letter received from adjutant general's office on 21 December 1881, "Letters Sent, Endorsements, Telegrams, 2 January 1870–1 July 1885, Fort Craig, New Mexico" ("Letters Sent"), United States Army Commands, RG 98, NA. Post records were delivered to the quartermaster department for shipment on 19 December 1881; as of 29 September 1883 they had not arrived at Fort Craig.
4. Marion C. Grinstead, *Life and Death of a Frontier Fort: Fort Craig, New Mexico, 1854–1885* (Socorro, New Mexico: Socorro County Historical Society Publications in History, vol. VII, 1973), p. 4; Robert W. Frazer, ed., *Mansfield on the Condition of the Western Forts, 1854–54* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 45–50.
5. Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios Commonly Called Forts West of the Mississippi River to 1898* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 98; Grinstead, *Life and Death of a Frontier Fort,* pp. 4, 7; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, 1798–1903,* vol. II (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), p. 233. Louis Craig's service began on 14 October 1837.
6. The following ground plans were consulted: 1854, 1865, 1866, Office of the Chief Engineer, RG 77, NA; 1873, 1883, 1885, "Quartermaster General Consolidated File," RG 92, NA; ca. 1869, 1882, Cemeterial File, "Reports and Maps of Fort Craig, New Mexico," Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94, NA; 1878, 1884, Peggy A. Gerow, *A Cultural Resources Inventory and Mapping of the Fort Craig Special Management Area, Socorro County, New Mexico* (United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Contract No. SRA YA-CT5-340042-01, 1988), pp. 31, 32. The 1854 plan apparently represents Fort Craig for that year but the Civil War changes have been added to it. As noted by Frank D. Reeve, ed., "Frederick E. Phelps: A Soldier's Memoirs," *New Mexico Historical Review* XXI (1950), p. 45, Phelps said the wall was about 3 feet high to keep stray cattle out.
7. George P. Hammond, ed., *Campaigns in the West, 1856–1861: The Journal and Letters of Colonel John Van Deusen Dubois* (Tucson: The Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, 1949), p. 105. Dubois had written, "Important orders have just been received, breaking up all posts on the river—Fillmore, Craig, Albuquerque and Burgwin. I hope it will be enforced. . . ." The post return for April 1860 does not note receiving such an order, but General Order 6, of 12 March 1860, Headquarters of the Army, received at Fort Craig on 4 April does note that mounted troops are to be relocated. Three companies of the Regiment of Mounted Rifles were at Craig at the time; "Post Returns, Fort Craig, New Mexico, 1854–1885" ("Post Returns"), Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800–1916, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94, NA.
8. Fort Fillmore was established on 23 September 1851 and named for President Millard Fillmore. The Texans garrisoned it until 8 July 1862, when they, too, abandoned it in the face of oncoming troops from California. Although the flag

was raised over the post in August 1862 by California Volunteers, it was garrisoned only until the tenth of October of that year; Frazer, *Forts of the West,* p. 99. Fort Stanton was established 4 May 1855, about 4 miles northwest of Lincoln, New Mexico, on the Bonito River. Upon abandonment it was set on fire by Union troops but rain put out the flames (ibid., pp. 103–104). It is presently the site of the State Hospital for the Mentally Handicapped, which is housed in many of the graceful buildings of the post–Civil War fort.

9. November 1876, March 1878, December 1881, November 1882, "Post Returns," RG 94, NA; S. C. Agnew, *Garrisons of the Regular U.S. Army—New Mexico: 1846–1899* (Santa Fe: Press of the Territorian, 1971), pp. 53, 88–101, 111. Ruins of Ojo Caliente are roughly 20 miles north of Winston, New Mexico, on the Alamosa River. Fort Tularosa was established near the present town of Alma, New Mexico, on 30 April 1872; was moved 18 miles east to Horse Springs; and was abandoned 26 November 1874.
10. Telegram from commanding officer, District of New Mexico, 27 May 1880, "Quartermaster General Consolidated File," RG 92, NA.
11. Bean retired on 29 September 1890; Heitman, *Historical Register,* p. 203.
12. Endorsement of 15 December 1880 on letter from post quartermaster, endorsement of 26 May 1881 on letter from post quartermaster, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA. The two companies were Company C, Fifteenth U.S. Infantry, and Company D (10), Ninth U.S. Cavalry, December 1880, "Post Returns," RG 94, NA.
13. Post commander to Department of New Mexico, 9 July 1861, "Letters Sent, 9 June 1852–17 August 1864, Fort Craig, New Mexico, Roll 1" ("Letters Sent, Roll 1"), United States Army Commands, RG 98, NA.
14. General Order 27, Headquarters, Department of New Mexico, 8 August 1861; *Confederate Victories in the Southwest: Prelude to Defeat, from the Official Records* (Albuquerque: Horn & Wallace, 1961), p. 77. Fort Union was established 26 July 1851, and was located at three adjacent sites in the same valley until 21 February 1891; Frazer, *Forts of the West,* pp. 105–106. The ruins are now a National Monument. Department of New Mexico to commanding officer, Southern Military District, Fort Craig, New Mexico, 13 and 30 August 1861, "Letters Received, 1854–1885, Army Continental Commands" ("Letters Received"), RG 393, NA.
15. Department of New Mexico to commanding officer, Southern Military District, 3 and 17 September 1861, "Letters Received," RG 393, NA.
16. *Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy* (published by The West Point Alumni Foundation, 1963), pp. 247–248; Heitman, *Historical Register,* vol. II, p. 163. Anderson was at the Battle of Valverde on 21 February 1862 and resigned his commission 7 January 1867. He died in California on 9 July 1910.
17. Nolie Mumey, ed., *Bloody Trails along the Rio Grande: A Day by Day Diary of Alonzo Ferdinand Ickis* (Denver: Old West, 1958), p. 68. Ickis gave measurements of 900 feet long by 600 feet wide, which is fairly accurate; Order 7, Headquarters, Fort Craig, 13 January 1862, "General Orders, Special Orders, Orders, and Circulars, April 1854–June 1885, Fort Craig, New Mexico" ("General Orders"), United States Army Commands, RG 393, NA.
18. Mumey, *Bloody Trails,* pp. 82, 83, 99; post commander to Department of New

Mexico, 3 April 1862, RG 98, NA. Christopher "Kit" Carson commanded Fort Craig from 1 to 20 April 1862; "Post Returns," RG 94, NA. Carson is so well known that further information here seems superfluous.

19. Post commander to commanding officer, Department of New Mexico, 9 December 1862, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA; Special Order, 8 January 1863; Special Order 15, 8 January 1863; Special Order 49, 14 February 1863, "General Orders," RG 393, NA. Smith was a member of the Fifth Infantry, California Volunteers. Post commander to Juan Montoya y Silba, 30 January 1863, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA. Polvadera is 10 and Lemitar is 5 miles north of Socorro.
20. Post commander to *alcalde,* San Pedro, 3 March 1863, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA. Very little is left of San Pedro, which is about 22 miles north of Fort Craig. Post adjutant to post quartermaster, 20 March 1863; post adjutant to *alcalde,* Socorro, 25 April 1863; Headquarters, Fort Craig, to Lt. Thomas A. Young, Fifth Infantry, California Volunteers, 10 June 1863, transmitting letter of Capt. A. L. Anderson, Fifth U.S. Infantry, Acting Engineer Officer, 30 May 1863, ibid. General Order 22, 2 June 1863, para. IV, directs all labor by troops be stopped, and para. V extends the thanks of the commanding officer, Department of New Mexico, "General Orders," RG 393, NA. Post commander to Department of New Mexico, 3 June 1863, acknowledges instructions to suspend work and begin drills, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA. A ration of whiskey was one gill. Santa Ana County, a relict of administration of New Mexico by the Republic of Mexico, was one of seven counties in three districts named in June 1844; William A. Keleher, *Turmoil in New Mexico, 1846–1868* (Santa Fe: Rydal Press, 1952), n. 16, 112.
21. Post commander, Fort Craig, to post commander, Fort McRae, 25 April 1863, regarding reports received on 13 April of an advance party of Texans. Fort McRae was established a few days earlier, on the third of April. Named for a North Carolinian, Capt. Alexander McRae, Third U.S. Cavalry, whose heroic defense of his battery at the Battle of Valverde earned the admiration and respect of both armies, it was deactivated on 30 October 1876. McRae Canyon, which empties into Elephant Butte Reservoir near T or C, bears his name, as does McRae Boulevard in El Paso, Texas; Marion C. Grinstead, "Alexander McRae, Soldier, Hero, Gentleman," unpublished manuscript. Post commander to commanding officer, Department of New Mexico, 28 April 1863, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA. Special Order 139, 11 May 1863, "General Orders," RG 393, NA, directs the fascines to be made 10 feet long by 9 inches thick. Also see Special Order 228, 20 July 1863, para. 1, ibid.; post adjutant to post quartermaster, 29 September 1863, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA.
22. General Order 7, 31 January 1864; Circular, 6 February 1864; General Order 8, 17 March 1865, "General Orders," RG 393, NA. The 1854 and 1866 ground plans show the latrines on the South Plain outside the walls. In 1963, the walls on the west side of the ruins were in admirable condition with virtually no dips or breaks in them. They began deteriorating in the late 1960s and early 1970s when artifact hunters started digging in the ditches and walking over the walls, damaging not only the exterior slope but the interior as well.
23. Department of New Mexico to commanding officer, Southern Military District, 21 September 1861, "Letters Received," RG 393, NA. The ration at the time

consisted of "¾ of a pound of pork or bacon, or 1¼ pounds of fresh or salt beef; 18 ounces of bread or flour, or 12 ounces of hard bread, or 1¼ pounds of corn meal; and at the rate to 100 rations, of 8 quarts of peas or beans, or in lieu thereof, 10 pounds of rice; 6 pounds of coffee; 12 pounds of sugar, 4 quarts of vinegar; 1½ pounds of tallow, or 1¼ pounds adamantine, or 1 pound sperm candles; 4 pounds of soap, and 2 quarts of salt." For troops on the march or campaigning, or on board ship, the ration of hard bread was 1 pound; *Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1857* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1857), para. 1069, para. 1071, p. 206.

24. Post commander to Acting Commissary of Subsistence, Department of New Mexico, 3 June 1863, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA.
25. Post commander to Department of New Mexico, 23 June 1864, ibid.; Special Order 258, 12 July 1864, para. IV, "General Orders," RG 393, NA.
26. Department of New Mexico to post commander, 12 June 1865, transmitting plans with estimate of funds needed, "Letters Sent and Endorsement Books, 16 August 1864–29 December 1870, Fort Craig, New Mexico, Roll 2" ("Letters Sent, Roll 2"), United States Army Commands, RG 98, NA. Special Order 187, 12 August 1865; Special Order 207, 16 September 1865, para. II, "General Orders," RG 393, NA.
27. Post commander to Department of New Mexico, 8 and 19 August 1865; post commander to post quartermaster, 12 and 14 August 1865; the post quartermaster was directed to cover the adobes and arrange drainage if they had been accepted from the contractor, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA. The 1865 ground plan gives the measurements as 26 feet by 100 feet, or somewhat smaller than envisioned.
28. Post quartermaster to post adjutant, 22 August 1867; post commander to District of New Mexico, 27 August 1867, ibid.; General Order 1, Headquarters, District of New Mexico, 12 September 1865, redesignated the department as a "district" ("Post Returns"), RG 94, NA.
29. Endorsement from post quartermaster, 21 January 1868; endorsement from [post commander] to District of New Mexico, 21 January 1868, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
30. A request was made for 30 to 50 pounds of copper nails, copper hinges, and four to six locks; post commander to military storekeeper commanding Fort Union Arsenal, 23 January 1863; post commander to A. L. Anderson, "Comdg Exped in the Field," 25 April 1863; post commander to Department of New Mexico, 28 April 1863 and 15 June 1863, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA; the latter document acknowledges receipt of invoices for lightning rods.
31. Special Order 285, 27 July 1864, para. 2; post commander to Department of New Mexico, 15 May and 19 June 1865, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
32. Post commander to chief commissary of subsistence, Department of New Mexico, 15 May 1865; post commander to Department of New Mexico, 19 June 1865, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA.
33. Post quartermaster to District of New Mexico, 23 January 1867, and endorsement, 22 January 1867, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
34. Post commander to commanding officer, Fort Union Arsenal, 14 December 1866, ibid.
35. William Babcock Hazen graduated from West Point in 1855, twenty-eighth in a

class of 34; *Register of Graduates,* p. 244. After illustrious service on the frontier and in the Civil War, he earned a reputation as a whistle blower during the inquiry into post and Indian trader irregularities in the 1870s, which contributed to the downfall of Secretary of War William W. Belknap. In the 1880s, Hazen became the second Chief Signal Officer and was court-martialed for his outspokenness with regard to the failure of Secretary of War Robert Lincoln to send a rescue expedition in 1883 to the arctic for the Lady Franklin Bay (Greely) Expedition. Although he was found guilty, many believed that he was right. Hazen died on 16 January 1887 at the age of 56; *Register of Graduates,* p. 244; Heitman, *Historical Register,* vol. II, p. 517; T. J. Mackey, *The Hazen Court-Martial; The Responsibility for the Disaster to the Lady Franklin Bay Polar Expedition Definitely Established, with Proposed Reforms in the Law and Practice of Courts-Martial* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1885), p. 79.

36. Post commander to Department of New Mexico, 9 December 1862, reports the need for another prison room, stating the post had received nine prisoners from Mesilla; only one of the prisoners in the guardhouse was military. Post commander to U.S. District Judge, Santa Fe, 2 January 1863, again mentions the shortage of room for prisoners, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA.
37. Post commander to commanding officer, Company I, First Infantry, California Volunteers, 30 May 1863, ibid.
38. Post quartermaster to post commander, 14 March 1864, in reply to post commander to post quartermaster, 4 March 1864; endorsement by post commander, 14 March 1864; endorsement from Department of New Mexico to post quartermaster, 18 March 1864, ibid. The idea for using nearby stone was Capt. A. L. Anderson's.
39. U.S. War Department, *A Report on the Hygiene of the United States Army* (Washington, D.C.: Surgeon General's Office, Circular 8, 1875), p. 251. Each of the six underground cells measures "5 feet 7 inches long by 2 feet 10 inches wide, and 4 feet 10 inches high"; Acting Assistant Surgeons W. R. Brewer and H. G. Tidemann, in John A. Billings, *Report of Barracks and Hospitals of the United States Army* (Washington, D.C.: Surgeon General's Office, December 1880), p. 244. The Fort Craig surgeons reported that white and colored troops were housed in rooms on opposite sides of the sally port.
40. Endorsement, 13 October 1872, from District of New Mexico; endorsement of 15 November 1872, on letter from chief quartermaster, District of New Mexico, 11 November 1872, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA. The post had finally received money for repairs after a long dry spell.
41. Grinstead, *Life and Death of a Frontier Fort;* Lydia Spencer Lane, *I Married a Soldier, or Old Days in the Old Army* (Albuquerque: Horn & Wallace, 1964), p. 48; Letter received by post adjutant from post surgeon, 4 March 1861, "Letters Received," RG 393, NA; Lieutenant J. Wheeler to post commander, 24 November 1860, and endorsement from "Headquarters Squadron Regiment of Mounted Rifles," 24 November 1860, "Letters Received," RG 393, NA. Joseph "Fighting Joe" Wheeler was an 1860 graduate of West Point. He resigned in April 1861 to fight for the Confederacy, eventually attaining the rank of lieutenant general. He again served the federal government from 4 May 1898 to 10 September 1900, when he retired with the rank of brigadier general, U.S. Army. Following the Civil War, he worked diligently to ensure that the

reunion of the North and South not be torn by acrimonious dissent. Heitman, *Historical Register*, vol. II, p. 1024; T. C. DeLeon, *Joseph Wheeler, the Man, the Statesman, the Soldier, Seen in Semi-Biographical Sketches* (Kennesaw, Georgia: Continental Book Co., 1960, reprint of 1899 edition), pp. 80–94.

42. Endorsement, chief quartermaster to post commander, 5 December 1867; endorsement, [post commander] to District of New Mexico, 11 December 1867, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
43. Billings, *Report of Barracks and Hospitals*, p. 244.
44. Surgeon General's Office, *Hygiene Report*, p. 251.
45. Endorsement, post adjutant to post quartermaster, 20 December 1881, on letter from commanding officer, Troop M, Fourth U.S. Cavalry, 19 December 1881; endorsement from post quartermaster, 29 December 1881, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA.
46. Post commander to commanding officer, Los Lunas, New Mexico, 16 February 1863, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA. Los Lunas is about 20 miles south of Albuquerque.
47. Post commander to post quartermaster, 23 July 1865, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA; post quartermaster to chief quartermaster, Department of Missouri, 28 February 1878, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA. George A. Gage was a photographer who traveled in New Mexico and Arizona to pursue his trade; Richard Rudisill, *Photographers of the New Mexico Territory, 1854–1912* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 1973), p. 28. Although Rudisill notes that Gage signed a contract with the chief quartermaster of the District of New Mexico in August 1865, it appears that Gage was working earlier for the military since transportation would not have been furnished to a civilian not employed by the government.
48. General Order 18, 1 May 1868, "General Orders," RG 393, NA.
49. Billings, *Report of Barracks and Hospitals*, p. 245.
50. Endorsement of chief quartermaster, Department of Missouri, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 18 December 1869; endorsement from chief quartermaster, District of New Mexico, 30 April 1870; endorsement, post commander to District of New Mexico, 12 [10?] July 1870, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA; "Proposed Repair of Public Buildings at Fort Craig, New Mexico," endorsement, from quartermaster general, 11 March 1871, "Quartermaster General Consolidated File," RG 92, NA.
51. Endorsement from quartermaster general, 10 August 1870, endorsement from chief quartermaster, 24 August 1870, on "Special Estimate for Building Material at Fort Craig, N.M.," ibid. The gypsum found at Paraje, a ruined village about 8 miles south of Fort Craig, was blue-gray on the outside but soft and white when rubbed. When fired the rocks turned pure white and were ground into a powder and mixed with water. The rocks apparently came from the Caballo Mountains near Engle, New Mexico; Douglas Kevin Boyd, *Paraje (de Fra Cristobal): Investigations of a Territorial Period Hispanic Village Site in Southern New Mexico* (Amarillo: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Southwest Region), p. 152. In the Fort Craig records, two words—*jaspe* and cement—were used, but apparently not interchangeably.
52. Extract, Inspector General, Quartermaster General, October 1872; Inspector General's Office, Washington, D.C., 10 February 1873, "Quartermaster General Consolidated File," RG 92, NA.

53. Endorsement from quartermaster general, 20 July 1874, "Quartermaster General Consolidated File," RG 92, NA; endorsement from post quartermaster, 21 August 1874, on letter from chief quartermaster, 20 July 1874; endorsement from quartermaster general, 5 October 1874, on letter of 20 July 1874, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA.
54. Endorsement, post quartermaster to chief quartermaster, 29 June 1874, ibid.
55. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 23 October 1882; endorsement, post commander to District of New Mexico, 29 September 1882; endorsement, post commander to post quartermaster, 27 October 1882; post adjutant to commanding officer, Troop E, Fourth U.S. Cavalry, 28 December 1882, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA.
56. Post quartermaster to post adjutant, 22 August 1867; District of New Mexico to post commander, 6 September 1867, authorizing the hiring of two masons, "Letters Received," RG 393, NA.
57. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 9 August 1868; endorsement from District of New Mexico to chief quartermaster, 15 August 1868; endorsement from chief quartermaster to post quartermaster, 17 August 1868; endorsement from post quartermaster to District of New Mexico, 21 August 1868; endorsement from acting chief quartermaster to post quartermaster, 18 September 1868; endorsement from post commander to District of New Mexico, 13 October 1868, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
58. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 24 June 1870, ibid.; post commander to District of New Mexico, 11 April 1871, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA.
59. Endorsement, post adjutant to post quartermaster, 4 March 1883; endorsement, post adjutant to post quartermaster, 25 March 1883; endorsement, post quartermaster to post adjutant, 26 March 1883; endorsement, post adjutant, 27 March 1883, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA.
60. Order 143, 27 July 1882, "General Orders," RG 393, NA; endorsement, post commander to District of New Mexico, 10 December 1882; endorsement from chief quartermaster, District of New Mexico, 13 December 1882, said the bill was sent 11 December 1882, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA.
61. The iron roof is seen in the charming picture of Captain John W. Crawford's family taken on the port of the Officers' Quarters in 1891 (see Chapter 13). Captain Jack, the Poet Scout, was the post trader during part of the 1880s and was the on-site caretaker of Fort Craig when the army left. He was a fascinating personality and deserves far more attention than he has received.
62. General Order 20, 7 May 1868, "General Orders," RG 393, NA.
63. Post quartermaster to chief quartermaster, 23 May 1868, "Quartermaster General Consolidated File," RG 92, NA.
64. Endorsement, post commander to District of New Mexico, 18 September 1873, on Board of Survey, 11 August 1873, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA. A board of survey could be held for many reasons: to determine fault when public property was lost, stolen, or destroyed or had been in the care of a recently deceased officer, was unserviceable, during inventories, etc.
65. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 25 September 1873; endorsement, post adjutant, 23 November 1873, on letter from Fort Union Arsenal, 17 November 1873, ibid.; 10,000 rounds of ammunition was destroyed. A water

wagon was used to fill water barrels; many references are scattered throughout the Fort Craig records.

66. Post commander to chief commissary of subsistence, Department of New Mexico, 19 August 1865, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
67. Special Order 429, 17 December 1864, para. II, "General Orders," RG 393, NA.
68. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 13 April 1868, post commander to post quartermaster, 13 April 1868, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
69. Telegram, post commander to chief quartermaster, District of New Mexico, 4 November 1882; post commander to District of New Mexico, 25 November 1882, "Letters Sent."
70. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 10 January 1883, "Letters Sent"; Order 21, 25 January 1883, "General Orders."
71. Endorsement, post adjutant to post quartermaster, 24 June 1883, "Letters Sent."
72. Mumey, *Bloody Trails,* pp. 82, 87.
73. Post commander to commanding officer, Department of New Mexico, 15 March 1863, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA.
74. Endorsement on letter from post surgeon, 3 March 1876, endorsement from post quartermaster, 3 March 1876; letter from chief quartermaster, District of New Mexico, 15 March 1876, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA.
75. Endorsement, post commander to District of New Mexico, 4 May 1878, ibid.
76. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 25 February 1870, ibid.
77. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 26 September 1868; endorsement, commanding officer, District of New Mexico, to acting assistant adjutant general, District of New Mexico, 30 September 1868; endorsement, chief quartermaster to post quartermaster, 10 September 1869, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
78. Order 27, 9 October 1855; Order 8, 3 April 1856; General Order 28, 15 October 1869, para. I, "General Orders"; post commander to post quartermaster, 29 March 1865, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
79. Mumey, *Bloody Trails,* p. 99; General Order 20, 7 May 1868, "General Orders," RG 393, NA.
80. General Order 15, 15 April 1865, ibid.; post commander to post quartermaster, 11 July 1867; endorsement, post quartermaster to post commander, 11 July 1867, "Letters Sent," RG 98, NA.
81. General Order 7, 4 November 1869, "General Orders," RG 393, NA.
82. Special Order 180, 9 June 1864, ibid.
83. Special Orders 180 and 184, 9 June 1864, ibid.; post commander to Department of New Mexico, 15 June 1864, "Letters Sent, Roll 1," RG 98, NA.
84. Circular Letter 3, 14 April 1877, "General Orders," RG 393, NA.
85. Post commander to chief quartermaster, 30 May 1865; post commander to Department of New Mexico, 5 June 1865, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
86. Special Order 186, 11 August 1865; Special Order 187, 12 August 1865; Special Order 202, 4 September 1865; Special Order 207, 16 September 1865, "General Orders," RG 98, NA.
87. Post commander to District of New Mexico, 22 April 1866, "Letters Sent, Roll 2," RG 98, NA.
88. Post commander to chief quartermaster, Department of Missouri, 3 September 1868, ibid.



Figure 3.1
Geronimo's camp with sentinel, Chiricahua Apache.
(photo C. S. Fly, Museum of New Mexico, neg# 14211)

CHAPTER 3

Durwood Ball

Fort Craig and the Southwestern Indian Wars, 1854–1884



The mission of troops at Fort Craig was to defend settlements and travelers in the Rio Grande Valley from Indian raids and to aid the opening of agricultural, mineral, and grazing lands to economic development. A succession of post commanders mobilized and deployed both regular army and civilian militia forces to carry out this mission. Although the regular and volunteer troops at Fort Craig compiled an uneven combat record, they persevered in a grim, thankless mission that slowly eroded the ability of the Indians to defend their homelands from encroachment by Hispanic and Anglo settlers.

The United States Army located Fort Craig on the western bank of the Rio Grande approximately thirty miles below Socorro, New Mexico. The post lay at the northern entrance of the Jornada del Muerto, a ninety-mile waterless stretch of the Camino Real. Raiding parties of Navajos and Apaches often committed depredations against weakly defended travelers making that arduous passage. The operational range of troops at Fort Craig reached westward to the headwaters of the Gila River, northward to Albuquerque, eastward to the Pecos River, and southward to the southern end of the Jornada.[1]

Established in 1854, Fort Craig lay in the Military Department of New Mexico. The departmental commander presided over roughly all of present-day New Mexico and Arizona, the western tip of Texas, and southern Colorado, overseeing the military affairs of a turbulent population of Anglos, Hispanics, and Native Americans. For 200 years before the conquest of the Southwest by the United States, the Pueblo and Spanish New Mexicans had observed a complex relationship of war and trade with the Navajos, Apaches, Utes, Kiowas, and Comanches. Each side committed the atrocities of plunder, murder, and

enslavement against the other. The New Mexicans and Pueblos had generally clung to the Rio Grande. When they tried to expand beyond that valley, they invariably encountered stiff resistance from their nomadic neighbors. Later, as Anglo settlers encroached on the homelands of the Navajos, Apaches, Utes, Comanches, and Kiowas, they intensified the war against the nomadic tribes.[2] The United States government would spend millions of dollars to defeat the Indians and to end the war.

Fort Craig was part of a slender network of defensive posts that roughly lined the Rio Grande, the major north-south route through New Mexico Territory. In 1854, the defensive line comprised Fort Massachusetts in present-day southern Colorado, Cantonment Burgwin in Taos, Fort Union in the Mora River Valley, Fort Marcy in Santa Fe, the depot at Albuquerque, Fort Craig, Fort Thorn at the southern edge of the Jornada, Fort Fillmore in the Mesilla Valley, and Fort Bliss at Magoffinsville near El Paso, Texas. Over the years, the army would abandon some posts and add others in response to frontier exigencies, but on the whole, this military framework endured to the end of the century.[3]

On March 31, 1854, Capt. Daniel Chandler left Fort Conrad at the foot of Valverde Mesa and occupied Fort Craig ten miles southward with one company each of infantry and dragoons. During the active periods of the history of Fort Craig, the army would generally station from three to five companies at the post.[4] These troops would participate in departmental expeditions and in local defense. The latter category of operations often involved the "scout," either a pursuit of Indians and stolen stock, a preemption of Indian raids in the valley, or a reconnaissance of the Fort Craig sector. The Apaches and Navajos waged guerrilla warfare with tremendous skill and ran off thousands of head of livestock. Although the army could never station at Fort Craig sufficient numbers of troops to stop all of the raiding by Indians, capable commissioned and noncommissioned officers were able to conduct some successful operations.

Responding to recent murders by Mescalero Apaches on the San Antonio/El Paso road and in the Pecos River Valley, Captain Chandler led a column of infantry and dragoons to the Rio Bonito Valley, Mescalero country, in late June 1854. He demanded that the Mescaleros surrender the warriors who had recently committed the killings. Although two Mescaleros, Palanquito and Santos, traveled to Albuquerque and conferred with the departmental commander, Col. John Garland, other Mescalero bands continued their raids in southeastern New Mexico and western Texas. Having engaged no Indians in hostilities during his march, Chandler returned to Fort Craig on August 7, 1854. The following spring, the army established Fort Stanton on the Rio Bonito to control the Mescaleros.[5]

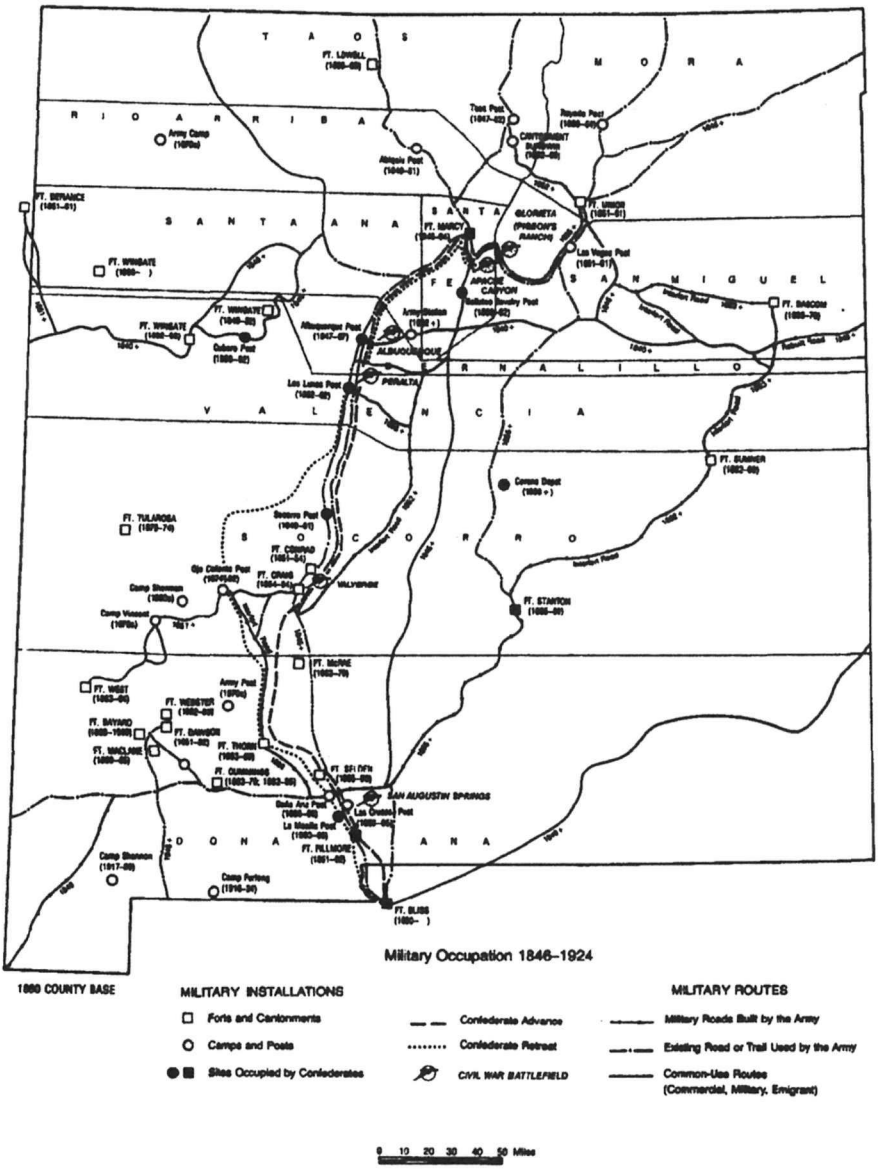


Figure 3.2
U.S. military installations in New Mexico during the territorial period.
(from Williams, ed. 1968:112, *New Mexico in Maps,*
University of New Mexico Press)

The presence of Fort Stanton freed the commander at Fort Craig to focus his resources on the Mimbres, Mogollon, Warm Springs, and Copper Mine Apaches who lived around the headwaters of the Gila River and who raided and plundered the settlements in the Rio Grande Valley between Albuquerque and El Paso. In late winter 1856, Colonel Garland dispatched Captain Chandler "to prevent the Apaches of the Gila River and Mogollon Mountains from depredating upon the property" of United States citizens. From Fort Craig, Chandler and 100 men rendezvoused on the upper Gila River with a column of the same size from Fort Thorn. Under Chandler's command, the combined force surprised a village of Mogollon Apaches in the Sierra Almagre, inflicted several casualties, and recovered "250 stolen sheep." On the return march along the Mimbres River, Chandler's men attacked an encampment of Indians who turned out to be friendly Mimbres Apaches under Delgadito. Afterward, an embarrassed Chandler paid an indemnity of sheep for the killing of several women and children.[6]

Although the army expected commanders of Fort Craig to control the Apaches who inhabited the country of the upper Gila River, it had only an imperfect knowledge of the region. In fall 1856, a new commander of Fort Craig, Maj. George B. Crittenden, called the Gila country "Terra incognita" and requested permission to lead an exploratory expedition through the area north of the Gila River. Although departmental commander Col. Benjamin L. E. Bonneville liked Crittenden's proposal, he instead assigned the major, with one company of mounted riflemen and one of Third Infantry from Fort Craig, to a campaign that he intended to lead personally against the Mogollon Apaches during the summer of 1857. His men failed to find the Mogollons, but they defeated a band of Mimbres and one of Coyoteros. The Fort Craig riflemen and infantry returned to their post in September of the same year.[7]

Troops remaining at Fort Craig were not inactive during Bonneville's Mogollon expedition. On July 22, 1857, Capt. Andrew Porter, the successor to Major Crittenden at Fort Craig, detached 1st Sgt. Hugh McQuaide and seven mounted riflemen from Company F to investigate a sighting of Indians below the post. An Irishman, McQuaide joined the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen in 1851, learned to fight Indians in Texas with his regiment, and developed into one of the frontier Army's outstanding combat leaders. His tenacity and skill in frontier warfare earned him the respect of both commissioned and noncommissioned officers throughout the army.[8]

On the evening of July 22, 1857, Sergeant McQuaide led his squadron southward from Fort Craig, struck the trail of four Indians fifteen miles below the post, and ordered his men to encamp. The next morning, McQuaide and his men crossed to the east bank of the Rio Grande, following the trail of the Indians,

and soon discovered several "Mexicans killed and scalped." After burying the victims, the squadron pursued and overtook "7,000 head" of stolen sheep, but the Indians had detected the pursuit and fled across the river. McQuaide now tracked the Indians, three of whom were mounted and one of whom was on foot. Recrossing to the western bank of the Rio Grande, McQuaide and his squadron trailed the Indians' "zig-zag course for 25 or 30 miles" to the west toward the Mogollon Mountains and then to the northwest, probably toward the San Mateo Mountains. McQuaide knew the Indians would strike for a pass through the mountains. After resting his men and horses at a waterless camp, he resumed the pursuit at 12:30 A.M. and reached the western entrance of the pass at daybreak. He rested his men and horses at a waterhole for an hour and then led them through the mountain pass. After emerging to the eastern slope of the mountain range, McQuaide tracked the Indians to the northeast. At 3:00 P.M., he and the squadron found an Indian mount that had been killed only in the previous thirty minutes. Ten miles later, they discovered another abandoned horse. By sunset, all four of the Indians had dispersed on foot into the mountains near San Antonio. McQuaide concluded that further pursuit was hopeless and encamped his men for the night. He and his troops returned to Fort Craig the following day. He had led the squadron on a scout of 160 miles.[9]

Although McQuaide failed to strike a direct blow to the Indians, he demonstrated the determination and understanding of the desert that successful frontier warfare required. He knew the locations of water and grass, the endurance and breaking point of his men and horses, and the practices of the Indians in flight. He could draw on his experiences in Texas and in the Fort Craig area and on those of other officers stationed at the post. When an officer or noncommissioned officer led a scout, he often kept field notes of the distance and direction of the march of his men and of the terrain over which they passed. He also carefully recorded the location of water and grass sources and stated whether the water could support both men and horses, whether the water source was temporary or permanent, whether the grass could support a large herd, and whether it was nutritious. If a scout commander was new to the Fort Craig sector, he usually could rely on a civilian guide to lead his troops through the unfamiliar terrain.[10]

In addition to the Mescalero and Gila River Apaches, troops at Fort Craig had to contend with the Navajos, who also raided the settlements and travelers passing through the country south of Albuquerque. During the second half of 1858 and part of 1859, the Fort Craig garrison focused its attention on Lt. Col. Dixon S. Miles's Navajo campaign. Company F of the Mounted Riflemen, under the command of Lt. William W. Averell, left Fort Craig on July 2, 1858, and joined the expedition at Fort Defiance in Navajo country. Averell and his men

participated both in scouting operations and in expeditionary sweeps through the Navajo homeland, burning crops and villages, taking captives, and confiscating stock. Company F marched through Cañon de Chelly with Miles. The pressure of Miles's operations forced the Navajos to sue for peace at the end of the year. Although they were quiet throughout most of 1859, the Navajos again made a "general descent" on the Rio Grande settlements below Albuquerque in early 1860 and stole vast herds of livestock. As they drove the animals down the east bank of the Rio Grande toward crossings below Fort Craig, Capt. Andrew Porter, commanding the post, dispatched squadrons of mounted riflemen in all directions to recover the herds and to punish the Navajos.[11]

The mounted riflemen at Fort Craig scored a number of successes. On February 7, 1860, Hugh McQuaide and fifteen men of Company F trailed stolen stock from the northern end of the Jornada westward and northwestward, overtaking the Navajos at the head of Cañon Alamosa, killing one Navajo in the attack, and recovering 1,200 sheep. On the same day, Captain Porter and twenty-five mounted riflemen rushed to cut off the retreat of a Navajo raiding party west of Fort Craig. Porter's success included a large measure of luck. The following day, forty Navajos drove a herd of 400 sheep and a few cattle in full view of Porter's men as they camped "on a wooded knoll at the base" of Luera Mountains. The warriors were apparently unaware of the proximity of the riflemen. Porter quickly but quietly mounted his men. Their pistols blazing, the mounted riflemen charged into the Navajos. In a running fight of eighteen miles, Porter's men killed or wounded sixteen warriors and recovered the stock.[12]

On February 8, 1860, Capt. George McLane and forty-one mounted riflemen surprised a party of approximately seventy Navajos who were driving a large herd of sheep and cattle through Cañon del Muerto below Fort Craig. McLane sent Lieutenant Cressey and a squadron after fifteen mounted Navajos who had fled back up the canyon. As forty-five warriors detached themselves from driving the herd and lodged themselves on a hillside, McLane pulled up and dismounted his men and ordered them to attack. In fifteen minutes of close combat, some hand-to-hand, his men killed thirteen warriors and drove the others over the hill. At the river crossing, a corporal's detail of ten men, concealed in the brush and trees, ambushed approximately ten Navajos driving the herd, killing two and recovering 1,000 sheep and forty-five cattle. In total that day, McLane's mounted riflemen recovered 5,000 sheep and 100 cattle.[13]

During the first two weeks of February 1860, three of five scouting missions from Fort Craig struck blows at the Navajos. After Captain Porter assessed the performance of his command and the "additional information" that poured into Fort Craig, he reported, ". . . those Indians killed by different detachments could not fall short of forty." His final tally for Navajo casualties is probably high, but

the success of his command against the Navajos in the month of February demonstrated that with experienced field commanders, determination, and a little luck, the army could interdict and punish Indian raiders.[14]

Successes like those of Porter's men, however, were not decisive victories over the Navajos, who only intensified their thefts of livestock in the valley during the first half of 1860. In addition, they besieged a supply train bound for Fort Defiance, attacked a horse herd at Fort Defiance, and assaulted Fort Defiance itself. Col. Thomas T. Fauntleroy, commanding the Department of New Mexico, organized another expedition to Navajo country, this time under Major E. R. S. Canby, in late summer 1860. On September 10, Capt. Lafayette McLaws led 150 men from Fort Craig to a rendezvous with two columns at Fort Defiance. As Canby's three columns destroyed Navajo villages and crops in the Chuska Mountains and the country immediately beyond, Colonel Fauntleroy ordered Captain Porter to Fort Craig and instructed him to organize and lead a striking column from the post to the Colorado Chiquito, where Canby believed the Navajos had sought refuge. When Canby received information that the Navajos were located on the Rio Puerco, however, Fauntleroy rescinded the order. By March 1861, Canby's roving columns had impoverished the Navajos, who sued for peace.[15]

The peace was short-lived, however. During 1861, Fort Craig and other military posts in New Mexico Territory were caught up in the crisis of the Civil War and focused their resources on defending against and repulsing the Confederate invasion. Canby was promoted to colonel and placed in command of the Department of New Mexico. From his new post, he informed his superiors that the Navajos and Mescaleros were "exceedingly troublesome" and gave "constant employment" to his troops. He added that New Mexicans compounded the turmoil with their retaliatory raids aimed at the plunder, murder, and enslavement of the Indians, the Navajos in particular. Canby believed that short of isolating and civilizing the peaceful elements of the Navajo Nation on reservations beyond the reach of the Navajo war faction and of the pernicious whites, the federal government would have to wage a long, costly war of extermination, one that the United States could not win in the deserts and mountains of the Southwest.[16]

After the Confederate invasion of New Mexico was stopped at Glorieta Pass in March 1862, Canby was called to the eastern Civil War battle front during the late summer. He left the mission of defending the Southwest from further Confederate invasion and of pacifying the Apaches and Navajos to Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, an old frontier dragoon. Despotic, humorless, and brilliant, Carleton would demonstrate an unparalleled understanding of the strategic and tactical demands of Indian warfare in the deserts and mountains of the

Southwest. He believed that he could provide only an inadequate defense of the territory against the Texas Confederates until he chastised the Indians and banished them to reservations. During the spring and summer of 1862, Carleton relayed his California Volunteer Infantry and Cavalry from California to Arizona and New Mexico. After securing Arizona Territory for the Union, he left Col. Joseph R. West in charge of the District of Arizona, which he would command from Mesilla. In August 1862, Carleton took command of the Department of New Mexico, a jurisdiction that included all of New Mexico and Arizona territories. From his office in Santa Fe, he pursued the Indian war with demonic energy.[17]

Straddling one of the Confederate invasion routes, Fort Craig was a critical post in Carleton's defense plan for southern New Mexico. He believed that one route of Confederate ingress would pass through Fort Stanton, thence to Fort Craig, the department's "chief magazine of subsistence." Carleton immediately ordered Col. Kit Carson to reoccupy Fort Stanton, which had been abandoned in advance of the Confederate invasion, with New Mexico volunteers. Lt. Col. Edwin A. Rigg was sent to renovate the defensive works at Fort Craig with California volunteers. To Rigg, Carleton declared, "Fort Craig is to be held with the old flag flying over it as long as a man of the garrison can pull a trigger, it makes no odds what force comes against it."[18]

To combat the Indians in his department, Carleton put all troops, including those at Fort Craig, on full alert. While he loosed Kit Carson and his volunteers on the Mescaleros in fall 1862, he ordered Colonel Rigg to put his company of cavalry in readiness "for *active* service" in the field at a moment's notice. In August 1863, as Carson prepared to invade Navajo country, Carleton ordered Rigg to lay ambushes at springs and waterholes where the Navajos rested their mounts, jerked beef, and watered stolen stock during their flights homeward. Carleton wanted Rigg's troops constantly in the field. In short, the general demanded that his men take the offensive against the Indians to deny them sanctuary and resources.[19]

Fort Craig was integral to Carleton's grand plan for the development of the Southwest. He was messianic in his promotions of the deposits of precious metals at the headwaters of the Gila River. He called the region "a new El Dorado" and ordered Gen. Joseph R. West, commanding the District of Arizona from Mesilla, to lead a winter campaign against the Gila Apaches and to plant a post at Pinos Altos, where the Indians had besieged miners throughout 1862.[20]

Carleton engaged the troops at Fort Craig in his scheme to open the entire Gila River country to miners. As General West led companies of California volunteers from Fort McLane on the Mimbres River toward Pinos Altos, Capt. William Calloway and eighty-five infantrymen marched from Fort Craig toward

the Gila River in search of Apaches. In the dead of winter 1863, they entered the rugged mountain country and subsequently suffered dearly from exposure to the cold and snow. Weak and ill from their hardships, they returned to Fort Craig without locating any Indians.[21]

Carleton wanted to open a direct road from Fort Craig to Fort West at Pinos Altos and assigned Capt. Allen L. Anderson to the mission of locating a new route. Between April 1863 and the end of the year, Anderson led several commands from Fort Craig into the mountains and deserts to the west in search of a passable trail, but failed to find one across the Mogollon Mountains. At one point, he wrote, "We have utterly failed. . . ." As a result, troops and wagon trains in the Department of New Mexico continued to follow the far-southern route from Mesilla to Tucson.[22]

In response to fresh gold discoveries in the central mountains of Arizona Territory, Carleton escalated the warfare against the Apaches in the Gila country during 1864. In late spring, Colonel Rigg led elements of the California and New Mexico volunteers from Las Cruces to the Tularosa River Valley, where he oversaw the construction of Fort Goodwin. From mining settlements and military posts, Carleton inundated the mountains with mobile squadrons of soldiers, miners, and friendly Indians. As part of his plan, he sent Col. Oscar Brown with a column from Fort Craig westward toward the White Mountains, where the Apaches had sought refuge from Rigg's expedition. Brown's men scoured the country during the late fall and returned to Fort Craig with four captives in December 1864.[23]

During the Civil War, the soldiers at Fort Craig continued their mission of local defense. Colonel Rigg developed a network of picket posts that guarded crossings of the Rio Grande from San Diego to Los Pinos. His troops escorted government trains, government officials, and mail carriers across the Jornada del Muerto. Carleton used the military stores at Fort Craig to supply the expeditions of the New Mexico militia against the Indians. He exhorted the troops at Fort Craig to take up active scouting operations against the Indians and gave explicit instructions to his field commanders regarding the officering, outfitting, and execution of those missions. To Rigg, he wrote, "Picked men and officers, each striving to his utmost [,] will accomplish a good deal. To move silently; *[sic]* to hunt Indians, is the only way to accomplish anything at all. For God's sake let the command move light. . . ." To defeat the Indians in the desert, Carleton believed his men had to adopt the Indians' methods.[24] He articulated a scouting doctrine that he had practiced during his pre–Civil War service in the West as a First Dragoon, a doctrine that the mounted riflemen at Fort Craig had employed implicitly in their operations during the 1850s.

Carleton's favorite soldier in the Fort Craig area was Capt. Henry Green, a California infantry volunteer. Green was a model Indian fighter, unrelenting and fierce, qualities that his men adopted and that Carleton encouraged. In August 1864, Green and a scouting party rode into Fort Craig from the Gila River country with six captives, nineteen head of cattle, and three scalps. A week later, Green mounted twenty men on "post team mules" at Fort McRae and led them on a three-day pursuit of Indians in the Alamancita Mountains. Green positioned his men on the rims of canyons and ordered them to fire down on the Indians, who scattered into the rocks and trees. Green's chase demonstrated the kind of dogged determination that Carleton demanded from his officers.[25]

In spite of Colonel Rigg's elaborate defense system and his routine deployment of scouts, the garrison at Fort Craig was unable to stop the raids on the Rio Grande by the Apaches and Navajos who routinely ran off herds from the valley. Carleton implored the War Department to send additional troops of cavalry to his department, but his superiors in Washington were absorbed in the climactic campaigns against the Confederacy and ignored his pleas. He watched his command dwindle during the second half of 1864. Much to his disappointment, few of the California volunteers reenlisted when their terms expired. By March 1865, Carleton had six companies of California infantry, one company of California cavalry, and some New Mexico cavalry. Never again did he assemble and command the effective force with which he waged total war on the Mescaleros and Navajos during 1863 and 1864.[26]

In the post–Civil War reorganization of the military West, Fort Craig continued under the jurisdiction of the District of New Mexico, which now included only the Territory of New Mexico. Under this arrangement, Carleton answered to the headquarters of the Department of the Missouri. The War Department gave the Territory of Arizona to the Department of California and western Texas to the Fifth Military District. Carleton, however, believed that New Mexico, Arizona, and western Texas comprised a unique region and that the War Department should maintain the integrity of the old Department of New Mexico. To the Adjutant General of the Army, Carleton wrote, "This country cannot be judged of by any rule applicable to any other portion of the United States." Holding on to portions of the New Mexico volunteers, Carleton was able to keep troop strength in the District of New Mexico at approximately 1,500 men with the addition of elements of the Third Cavalry, Fifth Infantry, and the 125th Colored Infantry.[27]

The major military problem facing the troops at Fort Craig and those at other posts in the territory was controlling the Apaches who lived freely in southern portions of New Mexico. The Mescaleros fled the Bosque Redondo Reservation in December 1865 and returned to their traditional homeland in

southeastern New Mexico and western Texas, where they resumed their raids against commercial and government traffic on the San Antonio/El Paso road and against settlers in the Pecos River and Rio Grande valleys. They even stampeded the post herd at Fort Craig on several occasions. To Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock, commanding the Department of the Missouri, Carleton wrote, "*The rifle* is the only law which will ever govern the fierce Apaches."[28]

Postwar troops at Fort Craig mounted hard pursuits of Apache raiding parties but generally failed to overtake them. In July and August 1867, Col. W. R. Gerhart and fifty-four troops tracked what they thought was a raiding party on a winding course that took them nearly to the border with Arizona. The trail suddenly turned eastward, then northward. When Gerhart rode into Fort Wingate, he realized that his men had been chasing a scouting patrol from that post. By the time they pulled into Fort Craig, they had endured a bruising desert march of "448 miles."[29]

Col. George W. Getty, commanding the District of New Mexico, ordered an infantry scout against the Mescaleros in 1869. Troops from Fort Craig rendezvoused at Fort Selden with men from the other southwestern posts. Capt. Alexander Moore of the Thirty-eighth Infantry led 180 troops into the Guadalupe Mountains in western Texas but failed to strike the Indians. In addition to fighting Mescaleros, Fort Craig troops campaigned with soldiers from Forts Bayard, Cummings, and Selden against Apaches on the Mimbres River and in the Chiricahua Mountains.[30]

Before the army temporarily deactivated Fort Craig in 1878, the post commander oversaw the establishment and management of an Apache reservation on Tularosa Creek west of the Rio Grande. In October 1871, a company of the Fifteenth Infantry and a squadron of the Eighth Cavalry escorted Col. Gordon Granger, commanding the District of New Mexico, to the Tularosa Valley, where the government planned to locate a new post and to transfer the Apache bands of Loco, Victorio, and Chico. During April and May 1873, Lt. Col. Thomas Devin of the Eighth Cavalry from Fort Craig supervised the removal of the bands to the new agency, completing the operation in July. When the government removed the Tularosa Reservation to Ojo Caliente several years later, the commander of Fort Craig continued to cooperate with the agent and to provide guard details.[31]

When Victorio and his followers raided across southern New Mexico and western Texas during late 1879 and most of 1880, the army reopened Fort Craig to allay the fears of residents in the area, but the fort's illustrious Indian-fighting days had ended. The few Western Apaches still at war with the United States engaged troops in western Texas, southern New Mexico, and southern Arizona.

Troops at Fort Craig were north of the theaters of military operations. The army deactivated Fort Craig in September 1884.[32]

The regular troops at Fort Craig did not put an end to Indian depredations in their sector of the Rio Grande Valley, but any sensible army officer knew that waging war with a small army against the western Indians was a crapshoot. At best, a commander who entered the field in pursuit of Indians might *see* them in one out of three expeditions. What was remarkable was that the army endured a forty-year guerrilla war in the far Southwest. Its commissioned and noncommissioned officers adjusted to the demands of the human populations and natural geography of the region. Soldiers like Andrew Porter, Hugh McQuaide, Edwin Rigg, and Henry Green learned the locations of the water holes and grazing patches that enabled them to scout the mountains and desert surrounding Fort Craig, to anticipate the approach of Indian raiders during a full moon, to track Indian raiders through the wilderness, and to carry military force into the heart of Indian homelands.

The garrisons at Fort Craig and other southwestern stations ultimately overcame the resistance of the Native Americans by providing armed islands from which white settlements spread into southwestern river valleys and undermined the subsistence economies of the Indians. Insightful army officers realized that economic development was the strongest weapon in the army's arsenal and that the War Department should promote the building of wagon roads, railroads, forts, and other infrastructures through which the nation could channel its human and economic power against the American Indians. For thirty years, Fort Craig was integral to the process of development that finally defeated the Apaches, Navajos, and others and ended the Indian wars of the Southwest. •

Notes

1. Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts West of the Mississippi River to 1898* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 98; Robert R. Roberts, "Fort Craig," *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts: The Military, Pioneer, and Trading Posts of the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 523–524; A short history of Fort Craig can be found in Marion C. Grinstead, *Life and Death of a Frontier Fort: Fort Craig, New Mexico, 1854–1885* (Socorro, New Mexico: Socorro County Historical Society, 1973); For a book-length study, see F. Stanley, *Fort Craig* (Pampa, Texas: Pampa Print Shop, 1963).
2. Ralph P. Thian, *Notes Illustrating the Military Geography of the United States 1813–1880* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 79: Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian, 1848–1865* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), chap. 5; Averam B. Bender, *The March of Empire: Frontier Defense of the Southwest, 1848–1860* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1952), chap. 10; for relations between the Navajos and the New Mexicans, see Robert M. Utley's introduction in the revised edition of Frank McNitt, *Navajo Wars: Military Campaigns, Slave Raids, and Reprisals* (University of New Mexico Press, 1990); for Comanche–New Mexican relations, see Charles Kenner, *A History of New Mexican–Plains Indian Relations* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969); for a study of Apache–United States relations see Ralph Hedrick Ogle, *Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 1848–1886,* intro. Oakah L. Jones, Jr. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1970); and William B. Griffen documents Apache-Mexican relations in *Apaches at War & Peace: The Janos Presidio, 1750–1858* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).
3. Averam B. Bender, *The March of Empire,* pp. 37–41; Utley, *Frontersmen in Blue,* pp. 86–88.
4. The U.S. Army constantly shifted troops between stations to meet frontier unrest and crises; for troop levels at Fort Craig, see Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800–1916, Record Group 94, National Archives (hereafter PR, RG 94), MG17, rolls 261–262; Roberts, "Fort Conrad," *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts,* p. 523, and "Fort Craig," pp. 523–524; and Fort Craig, March 1854, PR, RG 94, NA, M617, roll 261.
5. Nichols to Chandler, 17 June 1854, Albuquerque, Letters Sent, Department of New Mexico, v. 5 (9/6 NMex), Record Group 393, National Archives (hereafter LS, DNM, RG 393, NA), M1072, roll 1; Nichols to Chandler, 27 July 1854, Albuquerque, ibid.; Fort Craig, June 1854, Post Returns, RG 94, National Archives, M617, roll 261; Fort Craig, August 1854, ibid.; Frazer, "Stanton," *Forts of the West,* pp. 103–104; and C. L. Sonnichsen, *The Mescalero Apaches* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 71.
6. Nichols to Chandler, 24 February 1856, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 5 (9/6 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 1; Chandler to Nichols, 11 July 1854, Fort Craig, C29/1856, Letters Received, Department of New Mexico, Record Group 393, National Archives (hereafter LR, DNM, RG 393, NA), M120, roll 5; Fort Craig, March 1856, PR, RG 94, NA, M617, roll 261; Fort Craig, April 1856, ibid.; Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue,* 82, 154; and "Gila Apaches," *Handbook of the*

American Indians North of Mexico, pt. 1, ed. Frederick Webb Hodge (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971), p. 492.

7. Crittenden to Nichols, 27 September 1856, Fort Craig, C42/1856, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 5; Nichols to Crittenden, 26 October 1856, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 6 (10 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 2; Nichols to Officer Commanding Fort Craig, 30 June 1857, Santa Fe, ibid.; Fort Craig, April 1857, PR, RG 94, NA, M617, roll 261; Fort Craig, July 1857, ibid.; Fort Craig, August 1857, ibid.; for description of the Gila Expedition, see Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue,* pp. 155–157; and Raphael P. Thian, *Notes Illustrating the Military Geography of the United States 1813–1880* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 79.
8. McQuaide to Porter, 25 July 1857, Fort Craig P7/1/1857, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 6; Porter to Wilkins, 13 February 1860, Fort Craig , P6/1860, ibid.; Francis B. Heitman, "Hugh McQuaide," *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, 1789–1903,* v. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), p. 681; in the text, I have used McQuaide's own spelling of his name, although Heitman uses a different one.
9. McQuaide to Porter, 25 July 1857, Fort Craig P7/1/1857, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 6.
10. Porter to Crittenden, 17 February 1857, Fort Craig, C6/1/1857, ibid.; Davis to Crittenden, 20 February 1857, Fort Craig , C6/2/1857, ibid.
11. Nichols to Chandler, 24 June 1858, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 6 (10 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 2; Fort Craig, July 1858, PR, RG 94, NA, M617, roll 261; Stapleton to Porter, 10 January 1860, Stapleton's Ranch, P2/[enclosure]/1860, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 12; for a discussion of the Navajo campaign in 1858, see Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue,* pp. 168–170; and for the activities of Company F, the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, see Averell, *Ten Years in the Saddle,* pp. 155–211.
12. McQuaide to Porter, 13 February 1860, P6/2/1860, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 12; Porter to Wilkins, 13 February 1860, P6/1860, ibid.
13. McLane to Hatch, 11 February 1860, Fort Craig, P6/1/1860, ibid.
14. Porter to Wilkins, 11 February 1860, Fort Craig, P5/1860, ibid.; Porter to Wilkins, 13 February 1860, P6/1860, ibid.
15. For Canby's Navajo campaign, see Max L. Heyman, Jr., *Prudent Soldier: A Biography of Major General E. R. S. Canby 1817–1873* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, 1959), pp. 113–136; Gatlin to Maury, 11 September 1860, Fort Craig, G16/1860, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 11; Porter to Maury, 6 December 1860, Fort Craig, P60/1860, ibid., roll 12; Maury to Porter, 30 November 1860, Santa Fe, LS, DNM v. 6 (10 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 2; Maury to Gatlin, 18 December 1860, Santa Fe, ibid.
16. Canby to Ass[is]t[ant] Adj[u]t[ant] General, Department of the West, 1 December 1861, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 7 (11 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 2; and [Canby] to Adjut[ant] General of the Army, 10 August [18]62, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 8 (12 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 2.
17. For a short treatment of Carleton's career, see Arrell Morgan Gibson, "James H. Carleton," *Soldiers West: Biographies from the Military Frontier,* ed. Paul Andrew Hutton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp. 59–77; for a full-

length biography of Carleton, see Aurora Hunt, *Major General James Henry Carleton, 1814–1873: Western Frontier Dragoon* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, 1958); and Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue,* chap. 12, is an excellent analysis of Carleton's tenure in New Mexico during the Civil War.

18. Carleton to Rigg, 5 December 1862, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 9 (13 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; and Carleton to Rigg, 3 October 1862, Santa Fe, ibid.
19. Carleton to Thomas, 30 September 1862, Santa Fe, ibid.; Carleton to Rigg, 8 October 1862, Santa Fe, ibid.; Carleton to Rigg, 4 August 1863, Santa Fe, ibid.; Carleton to Rigg, 6 August 1863, Santa Fe, ibid.; Carleton to Rigg, 14 August 1863, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 10 (14 NMex), ibid., roll 3; Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue,* pp. 235–237, 239–244; and Gibson, "Carleton," *Soldiers West,* p. 67.
20. Carleton to Halleck, 10 May 1863, Santa Fe, ibid.; Carleton to Thomas, 13 September 1863, Santa Fe LS, DNM, v. 9 (13 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; Carleton to West, 14 October 1862, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 9 (13 NMex), ibid.; and Carleton to Thomas, 2 January 1863, Fort Craig, ibid.
21. Rigg to Cutler, 24 January 1863, Fort Craig, R12/1863, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 20; and Rigg to Cutler, 23 February 1863, Fort Craig, R[illegible number]1863, ibid.
22. Rigg to Cutler, 24 January 1863, Fort Craig, R12/1863, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 20; and Rigg to Cutler, 23 February 1863, Fort Craig, A86/1863, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 18; Anderson to Ass[is]t[ant] Adj[u]t[ant] General, Department of New Mexico, 11 May 1863, Fort Craig, A91/1863, ibid.; Memorandum, Carleton; 18 September 1863, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 10 (14 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; Rigg to Cutler; 26 September 1863, Fort Craig, R[illegible]/1863, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 20; Carleton to Thomas, 2 August 1863, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 9 (13 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; and Carleton to Thomas, 20 September 1863, Santa Fe, ibid.
23. Rigg to Carleton, 19 May [18]64, Las Cruces, R119/1864, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, roll 25; Rigg to Smith, 2 July 1864, Fort Goodwin, R155/1864, ibid.; Rigg to Cutler, 14 September 1864, Fort Craig, R212/1864, ibid.; Brown to Cutler, 23 August 1864, Fort Craig, B450/1864, ibid., roll 22; Brown to Cutler, 5 September 1864, Fort Craig, B487/1864, ibid.; Brown to Cutler, 19 December 1864, Fort Craig, B685/1864, ibid.; Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue,* pp. 257–259; Frazer, "Fort Goodwin," *Forts of the West,* pp. 8–9; for a brief summary of the establishment of Fort Goodwin, see Charles and Jacqueline Meketa, *One Blanket and Ten Days Rations: First Infantry New Mexico Volunteers in Arizona, 1864–1866* (Globe, Arizona: Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1980), pp. 49–50.
24. Rigg to Cutler, 3 January 1864, Fort Craig, R3/1864, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 25; Carleton to Rigg, 1 April 1864, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 10 (14 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; Carleton to Commanding Officer, Fort Craig, 12 August 1864, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 11 (16 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3.
25. Bennett to Cutler, 8 August 1864, Fort Craig, B418/1864, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1120, roll 22; Green to Rigg, 19 August 1863, Fort Craig, R194/B/1863, ibid., roll 20; Green to Rigg, 17 November 1863, Fort McRae, G157/1863, ibid., roll 19.

26. Carleton to Thomas, 16 August 1863, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 10 (14 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; Carleton to Thomas, 8 May 1864, Santa Fe, ibid.; Carleton to Thomas, 27 August 1864, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 11 (16 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; Carleton to Thomas, 9 October 1864, Santa Fe, ibid.
27. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 168–171; Carleton to Adjutant General of the Army, 16 September 1865, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 11 (16 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; Carleton to Drum, 22 October 1865, Santa Fe, ibid.; Carleton to Sherburne, 7 October 1866, ibid.
28. Carleton to Hancock, 8 January 1866, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 12, RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 4; Carleton to Pope, 25 April 1866, LS, DNM, v. 11 (16 NMex), RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 3; Granger to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, 20 September 1871, LS, DNM, v. 14, RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 4; Getty to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of Missouri, 8 October 1869, ibid.
29. Gerhart to DeForrest, 12 July 1867, Fort Craig, C59/1867, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1088, roll 5; Gerhart to De Forrest, 18 July 1867, Ojo Caliente Fort Craig, C62/1867, ibid.; and Gerhart, Journal of a Scout, 18 July–August 1867, C77/1867, ibid.
30. Hunter to Moore, 12 March 1869, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 13, RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 4; Getty to McKeever, 13 March 1869, Santa Fe, ibid.; Hunter to Commanding Officer, Fort Craig, 11 March 1869, ibid.; Hunter to Grover, 22 December 1867, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 12, RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 4; Granger to A[ssistant] A[djutant] General, Department of Missouri, 4 May [18]71, Santa Fe, LS, DNM, v. 14, RG 393, NA, roll 4; and Lafferty to Devin, 25 May 1871, Santa Fe, ibid.
31. Lafferty to Commanding Officer, Fort Craig, 22 September 1871, LS, DNM, v. 14, RG 393, NA, M1072, roll 4; Granger to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of Missouri, 20 November 1871, ibid.; Devin to Sartle, 21 April [18]72 Fort Craig, D13/1872, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1088, roll 15; Piper to Devin, 19 April 1872, Canada Alamosa, D13/[enclosure]/1872, ibid.; Devin to Act[ing] Ass[istan]t Adj[utan]t General, [n.d.], [Fort Bayard], D31/1872, ibid.; Steelhammer to Act[in]g Ass[istan]t Adj[utan]t Gen[eral], 26 November 1876, Fort Craig, C243/1876, LR, DNM, RG 393, NA, M1088, roll 27.
32. Marion C. Grinstead, *Life and Death of a Frontier Fort,* p. 32.

CHAPTER 4

Dale Giese

Social Life at a Frontier Fort

[Editors' Note: The following has been transcribed from an extemporaneous talk presented by Dr. Giese. The social life of soldiers at Fort Union was apparently quite active and varied, but it is likely that elements of it were shared by the men at Fort Craig and other frontier posts. Fort Craig definitely shared a "Suds Row" and many of the activities of both high and low society. Fort Craig's guardhouse also served for a period as the Territorial Prison, and it had its share of the "Private McManns" described by Dr. Giese.]



I lived many years ago near Fort Union, along the Santa Fe Trail. This was a rather isolated place in comparison to living in the East, and I often wondered what the soldiers did there during their free time, since I was faced with the same situation on a 200,000-acre ranch seven miles from the nearest small town and thirty miles from Las Vegas, New Mexico. So, I did research, primarily in the newspapers and some original interviews, to learn what the soldiers' nonmilitary activities were like. I wanted to talk about that (for this symposium) because their activities were probably similar to those of soldiers at Fort Craig and the surrounding community.

Religion and Education

There were Episcopalian and Baptist chaplains who held church services, using various vacant buildings, at Fort Union. Officers' wives, in particular, became very involved in promoting the church, thinking it would be very good for the enlisted men, singing in the choir and doing things of this nature.

The church had holiday celebrations, but it was probably only at Christmas time that all of the enlisted men attended; attendance among the enlisted men was generally not very high.

The chaplain doubled as a school teacher. Again, one of the vacant buildings was used. Education was very important, and the children worked hard. School was also open to soldiers who wanted to attend, and to the children of those who

camped in the area of Fort Union. Other intellectual activities of the fort centered around the library, which had a total of 326 volumes, and received three daily and eleven weekly newspapers.

Clubs and Societies

The Missouri Lodge of the Masonic Order gave dispensation for a lodge to be provided in New Mexico in March of 1862, and the Chapman Lodge of the Masonic Order was chartered at Fort Union on June 2, 1866. This was quite an event at the fort, and membership was active. Theatrical societies included the Fort Union Dramatic Society and the Fort Union Comedy Company. These groups often performed at the post and in Las Vegas at the opera house. The theatrical society performances were an opportunity for social interaction between the soldiers and townspeople. Additionally, the Twenty-third Infantry band often performed in Las Vegas, and detachments of the band would play for dances there and at Wagon Mound.

There was a debating society, a biology club, a social club, and a literary society at Fort Union. The officers were the promoters of these groups, but some enlisted men did participate.

Daily Life

The officers' quarters were usually duplexes, with a large hall down the center, three rooms on each side, a veranda type front porch, and colored glass around the doors. The commanding officer's quarters had four rooms on each side, and he and his family had the entire house to themselves. Because there was always a danger of fire, there was an underground water system with two wells, and pumps and fire hydrants were found throughout the fort. By the 1870s officers had running water in their homes.

Naturally, soldiers always complained of the work they had to do, cutting wood, hauling trash, and things of this nature. One of the things they did at Fort Union, which was prescribed for all forts in New Mexico, was to raise food if they possibly could. At Fort Union, they raised pumpkins, beans, berries, turnips, beets, peas, parsnips, cucumbers, okra, onions, peppers, cabbage, radishes, asparagus, buster beans, carrots, and potatoes. At the fort's 7,000-foot elevation, it was a pretty cold, and plants had to be started early, so they built a hothouse. That hothouse was twenty by fifty feet, with a lot of glass along the south side, and of course, fires. Enlisted men were assigned to build and maintain these fires when the plants were being started in the hothouse. Water for the garden was provided by a mule or mules who turned a wheel to pump water from a well.

Officers often owned chickens and cows. I remember Katie Bowen writing once that a rattlesnake bit her cow, which precluded the use of the milk for quite

a while until the cow improved. It was also noted that, at one time, one of the women had dozens and dozens of eggs. She didn't know what to do with them all, so she baked a lot of fruit cakes, and the eggs were preserved in this manner in the cakes.

In addition to the food grown at the fort there is a long list of imported food. Probably most of the exotic items went to the officers, but foods at Fort Union included oysters, sardines, clams, mackerel, lobsters, and salmon.

The wives of the enlisted men often would earn extra income by becoming laundresses, and there was a "Suds Row," where the laundry was done. Officers had servants, often young Irish girls, found through employment agencies in Chicago. These young girls would travel west to the post, and the officers would foot the transportation bill—perhaps $2,000. Their employment as servants generally didn't last very long, since they were soon married, there being a scarcity of women at Fort Union. The officers decided that perhaps getting the ugliest servants possible would solve the problem, but it didn't work. Some of the female servants still received marriage proposals before they ever arrived. One man engaged a preacher and a carriage at Las Vegas and planned for the honeymoon before he ever saw his bride.

In later years, the officers solved the problem decisively by hiring Chinese men. About ten or twelve thousand Chinese who had worked on the Central Pacific Railroad were out of work when the tracks were joined with the Union Pacific in 1869 at Promontory Summit. These men were seeking employment and occasionally found it at the military posts. Only the unmarried enlisted men were not happy with the change in arrangements.

There were many sutlers and post traders and canteens at Fort Union—one of the favorites was William Moore. He was there for about ten years and had quite an establishment just off the supply depot area. He had a large building and carried supplies—a lot of supplies, with inventories of $300,000 to $500,000. He was apparently a very political man. He took one James Farmer on a tour to the East Coast once, and they stopped in to see Edwin Stanton, who was the Secretary of War, Abraham Lincoln, and others. John Dent, who was related to U. S. Grant, was another of the post traders.

Knowing the contract business, one can imagine the shady dealings that went on. The aforementioned James Farmer would bid on contracts after determining what the bid should be while playing cards with the officers. He would say, "I think I'll bid so-and-so on that contract for coal," and they would say, "That's a little high." Farmer would respond, saying "I think I'll bid this amount"; they would say, "That's a little low." So he would get the price just right and win the contract, and then sell the contract to someone else at a ten percent profit. I'm glad we don't do these things anymore.

Other concessions at Ft. Union included a restaurant owned by Adolf Greisinger, a hotel, a bowling alley, and a billiards room. Kit Carson who was quite a billiards player, frequented the billiards room, and when he made a very good shot, he would say, "Aye, Boys, Aye!"

Sports and Recreation

Gambling was an important recreational activity and included billiards, poker, dice, and a racetrack for mules and horses. The racetrack was five miles long, and hundreds of dollars would change hands during these races.

Bicycling was in vogue by the 1880s, and roller skating was a new sport for the children. Other activities included lawn tennis, handball, and walking matches—one challenge match lasted twelve hours. Boxing, using the old rules, not the new rules that we have today, was very popular. One boxing match went over 100 rounds and lasted three hours and twelve minutes. Shooting matches were very much in vogue, as well as hunting and fishing. Greyhounds were used in hunting of coyotes and antelope. William R. Shoemaker, who ran the arsenal at the fort and invented the Shoemaker bit, kept greyhounds and hunted with them. Other commonly hunted animals included deer, mountain sheep, bear, turkey, and duck. One sergeant shot seventy ducks in two days and brought them back for his company cook to prepare. It was always good to get away from the military food and have some of the fresh game from the area. Fishing along the Pecos River was also popular. During one five-day period, seven soldiers and some officers caught 1,000 trout using grasshoppers for bait. Clearly this was before bag limits.

Baseball was very important at Fort Union. The Fort Union Nine played Mora, Wagon Mound, Las Vegas, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque. They were always looking for money from the opposing towns to pay their transportation to these various places.

Drink and Other Vices

Drinking, of course, was a factor at Fort Union. The temperance societies were always attempting to put a damper on drinking, but their success appears to have been limited. Schlitz was one of the popular beers. It came in quart bottles and cost about twenty-five cents or so per bottle. The corks were wired on, and often the consumers would break the top of the bottle off rather than undo the wire; that's why so many bottles were broken. The excavated latrines at Fort Union contained hundreds and hundreds of beer and wine bottles. One of the temperance organizations was the Good Templars, which was established on the post in 1863; the organization itself, of course, dates back to the time of the crusades.

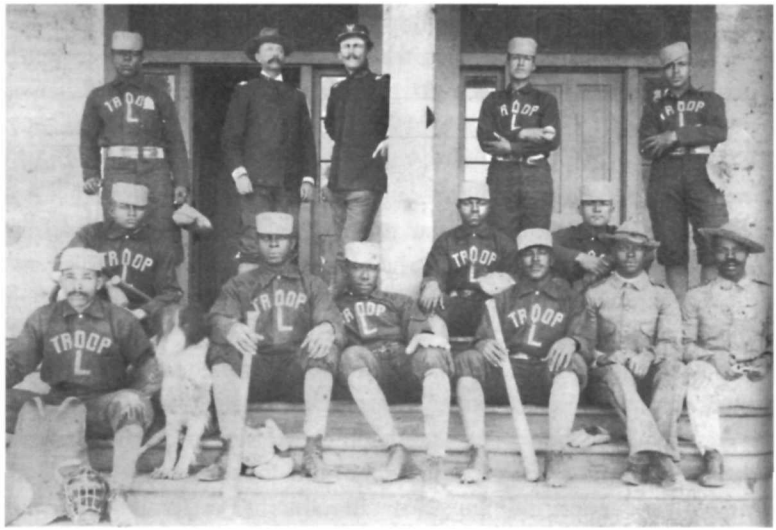


Figure 4.1 Troop L, Ninth Cavalry, Fort Wingate, ca 1899.
(Imperial Photo Gallery, Museum of New Mexico, neg# 98374)

Loma Parda was the pleasure town about which much has been written. It was located some seven miles from the fort. Two Canadians, Samuel and Martin McMartin, operated there at one time selling goods and liquor and running a house of prostitution. A lot of money could be made from the soldiers; there was even a taxi service that went from Fort Union or just outside the boundary of the fort to Loma Parda and back again. I had the good fortune of interviewing that taxi driver just a few years before his death.

There were also houses of prostitution in Las Vegas. During the post–Civil War years, these houses were segregated, one house for whites and one for blacks. The brothels were often raided, but usually it was only the black patrons who were arrested, not the white ones. Much information about prostitution and Fort Union came to light in the Sykes court-martial. Lt. George B. Sykes, knowing that there were many girls living in caves and canyons near the fort and were selling their wares, decided to set an example for them. Sykes arrested two famous prostitutes from Santa Fe, Jesusita and Black Sus, and had them whipped and marched off the reservation. He was able to defend himself in the ensuing court-martial by saying that he did it because they were causing serious problems at the post. Much of the supply, he claimed, was being given to these girls by the enlisted men. As an example, he added, they had lost, over time, 9,379 pounds of bacon, 1,191 pounds of ham, 4,003 pounds of coffee, 1,300 candles (star candles), and 6,000 pounds of sugar. What could he do, he asked, but whip these girls to stop this prostitution?

Crime and Punishment

A lot of murders took place. In fact, when my house at Fort Union was built, four burials were found in the back yard, and all four of those men had met violent deaths.

The penalty for desertion was "1 to 5"—sometimes death—and there were many ways that people tried to get out of the army. One German, Christian Bartholumous, thought that he needed to get out of Fort Union. He had a friend in Germany put advertisements in the newspaper that his aunt had died and left him a large inheritance, which he had to go to Germany to claim. He then had the friend clip these advertisements from the German newspaper and send them to the German consul in St. Louis. The German consul then sent them to the War Department and the War Department arranged for his discharge. The whole scheme came to light, however, when he ran away with the wife of one of the bandsmen at the fort.

One of the complete buildings that still stands at Fort Union is the military prison. It is a stone cell block with an adobe wall around the outside and heaters inside so heat would circulate—sometimes—in cold weather. At one point there was a prisoner named Charles McMann who was quite unmanageable. The commanding officer, Colonel Ellis, put him in the military prison, but McMann escaped many times; finally Ellis put irons on him. The Adjutant General learned of this and wrote to Ellis, asking, "Why did you put irons on this man? Why do you have to chain him to that military prison?" Ellis wrote back:

> I had the honor to acknowledge receipt, a few moments since, of communications from Headquarters, Department of Missouri, dated Oct. 6, 1875, calling for a report of the facts of the case of Charles McMann, especially as to the necessity of ironing him. This man is of gigantic physical strength; a horse thief, a deserter, a sneak thief, hypocritical in general; and a scoundrel in general. His career, during this past year that I have been at this post, notwithstanding the fact that he has been a prisoner, has been one of drunkenness, violence, and crime. With few exceptions, the enlisted men of the post were completely cowed by him. When he desired to leave the post, which he did from several days to several weeks at a time, he did so without leave or hindrance; on several occasions breaking his way through the wall, sometimes of the guard house and sometimes of the military prison, and escaping in that manner. Just previous to the departure of Major Alexander and the cavalry companies of the post, he broke through the walls of the military prison, and partly succeeded in breaking down the wall of the cavalry corral, apparently endeavoring to steal horses. Not

succeeding in this, he left the post unhindered. At about reveille, Major Alexander, commanding, had a company of cavalry mounted under the command of Captain Young. I heard him express his determination to pursue, capture and kill McMann. It was not done, however; why, I don't know. A few days after Major Alexander left for Texas, McMann came back into the post with an insolent swagger and delivered himself up. A few nights afterwards, he broke through the sides of the guard house and again escaped. At daylight, the ground being soft, I struck his trail and sent a Sergeant and some mounted men in pursuit. They captured him at a Mexican town some 10 miles from here, in a state of semi-nudity; he having sold his clothes. He was brought back to the post, where he attacked and nearly succeeded in overpowering the entire guard. He would have done so had he not been brought to submit by repeated blows by the butt end of their pieces. A few days after this, a sergeant of the guard, reported to me that he had escaped from the sentinel while cutting wood in the officers' yards. A search was instituted but he could not be found. That night between ten and twelve o'clock, the post was startled by the most frightful yells. The guard was turned out and McMann was discovered near the trader's store, executing a war dance and swearing vengeance on the officers and men of the post. On the approach of the guard, he attacked them in a savage manner but patience had ceased to be a virtue with the long-suffering men of this garrison, and he was promptly pulpified into quiet and placed in his cell. The next morning before reveille, he again aroused the post by his diabolic yells, and as his great strength prevented a sufficient number of men from entering the cell to iron him, he was again pulpified into silence. Violent conduct and brutal threats toward ladies and children of the post, and his publicly expressed determination to set fire to the quarters and stables of the post surgeon, the stables and hay racks of the depot quartermaster, and to murder myself and Dr. Gardner, immediately upon release from confinement, I concluded to securely iron him to prevent his carrying out these threats. Captain Kimbale at this post sent us a blacksmith to do the work, telling him in my presence, that if McMann succeeded in getting those irons off, he would immediately discharge him from his employ. McMann became very abusive, when getting measured for his manacles, threatening me with vengeance of his friend, General Pope, and stating that I did not dare to put irons on him, that no commanding officer dared to do this, that he would cut off any irons I could put on him with much more language of a similar nature; all this in sight and hearing of the guard. When the

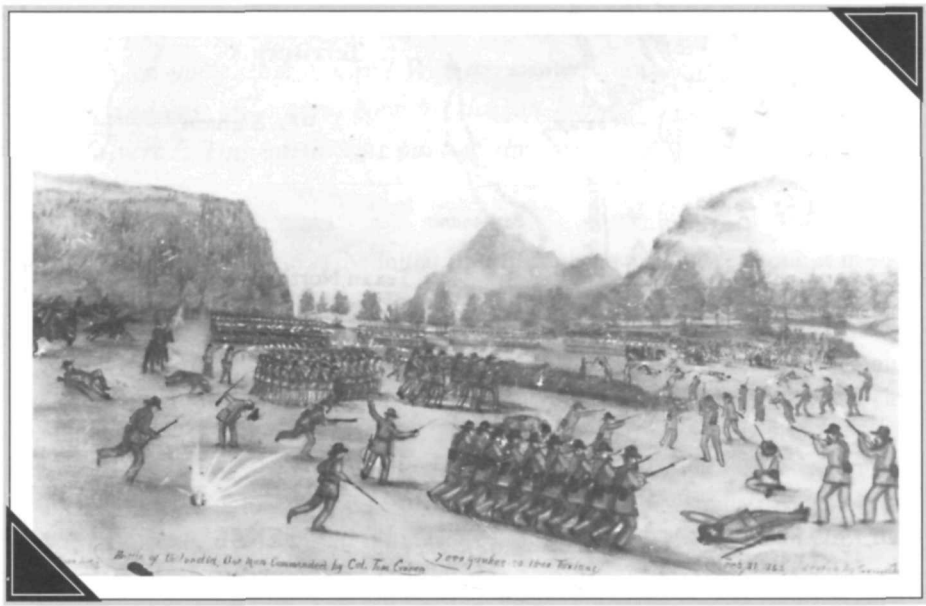
irons were made, they were brought to my quarters and examined and approved by Dr. Gardner, the post surgeon, and his assistant, Dr. McLain. I instructed to have them put on the prisoner the next day. But that evening, just after retreat, Dr. Gardner came to my quarters and earnestly recommended that they be put on immediately, as he had been told that McMann intended to break out of the guard house that night, and put his threats of murder and arson into execution. The irons were, at once, put on by candle light. Some two days afterwards, he went on sick report, and Dr. McLain informed me that he was endeavoring to get an inflammatory action set up in his hands by causing the irons to fall with undue pressure on his wrists. I asked if the irons should be removed, to which the doctor answered, "decidedly not." When he found he could not humbug the doctor, as he boasted of having repeatedly done at other posts, telling men that doctors and chaplains were his pet game, no more complaints were heard from him. A few days afterwards, while passing the guard house, I met him going to the rear. With one hand, he drew a pocket handkerchief from his pocket and waved it at me in an insolent manner; at the same time placing the thumb of his other hand upon his nose. He gyrated the rest of his fingers into the air in a manner usually intended to be especially exasperating. I merely mention this matter of circumstance to show that the sturdy vagabond did not seem to be at all inconvenienced by the weight of the irons. The above are but a few examples of his every day life while at this post. When the department commander was here a few weeks ago, I fully informed him of most if not all of these preceding facts, and also told him of the ridiculous claim of intimacy set up by McMann and requested he be taken from the post and sent to the military prison at Ft. Leavenworth. The commanding general took notes apparently of my conversation, upon the back of an official envelope, and promised compliance with my request. I think this man's character has been sufficiently made plain on several occasions. Butcher knives, files, duplicate keys of prison locks, and duplicate keys of patent shackles have been taken from his person and from among his blankets. I myself discovered and removed a large axe.

Well, McMann was presumably transferred to the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, or more logically to the insane asylum in Washington where this type of soldier was usually sent.

But this gives us an idea of some of the military prisons and the prisoners there, and an overview of one aspect of the social life at Fort Union. •

PART TWO

The Civil War Battle of Valverde



Battle of Valverde, February 1862
(Texas State Archives, Austin)

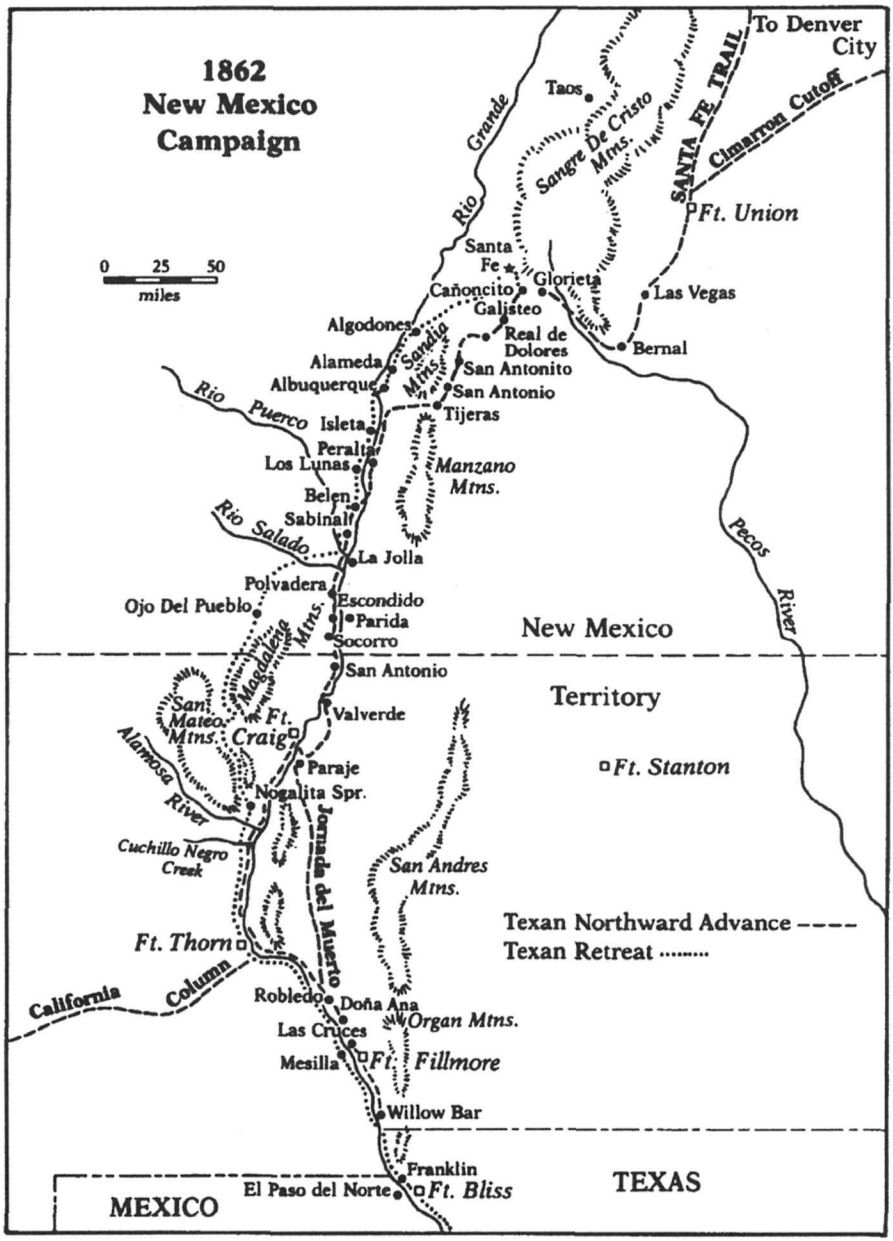


Figure 5.1
1862 New Mexico Campaign
(from Alberts, 1993:32, *Rebels on the Rio Grande*,
Merit Press Albuquerque)

CHAPTER 5

Larry Woodard

The Western Limits of Confederate Expansion



The United States Civil War *of 1861 to 1865 is one of those historical mileposts in the formation of our nation that fascinates Americans to this day. The roar of musketry, the long lines of men clad in blue or butternut brown, and the clash of horsemen with sabers glistening in the sun are etched in our national heritage for all times. The more famous battlefields, such as Bull Run, Shiloh, Antietam, Gettysburg, Atlanta, Spotsylvania, and Appomattox, were the scenes of great clashes of arms and, without exception, are located in the East and South. In this volume, we remember a far less well-known and perhaps less significant, but no less noble clash of Civil War armies that occurred just a few miles south and east of Socorro, New Mexico, on February 21, 1862: the Battle of Valverde. This battle was part of the brief western expansion of the Confederacy.*

By February of 1862, the initial clashes of the war had been fought in the East. The Confederacy had won a brilliant opening round at Bull Run, and Stonewall Jackson's fame as a combat commander was secure. In early February General Grant had captured Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, displaying the tenacity that would mark him as "Unconditional Surrender Grant."

While the major forces of the war were shaking out their respective armies and leaders in the East, a couple of western military men were preparing for the Valverde clash, which would ultimately spell success for one and failure for the other. Henry Hopkins Sibley was 45 years old at the time he invaded New Mexico with his army of 3,500 men recruited in Texas. Sibley had convinced Jefferson Davis to support a grandiose plan to snatch the West away from the Union. Despite having served in New Mexico before the war, Sibley embarked upon the campaign with the idea that his army could live off the land of New Mexico. Sibley's brigade left San Antonio amid the cheers of the townspeople on October

22, 1861, and by January 1862 had regrouped at Fort Thorn (near modern-day Hatch), New Mexico. The brigade had already taken Fort Bliss and Mesilla, designating the latter to be the new capital of this western Confederacy. Dividing his force, Sibley proceeded north on the Camino Real with an effective force of 2,515 men in February 1862.

Awaiting the Confederates at Fort Craig were Colonel E. R. S. Canby and 3,810 Union regulars and New Mexico volunteers. When Sibley arrived within view of Fort Craig on February 16, he saw with some amazement the difference in the condition of the old cavalry post he had known just a few months earlier. Some 3,500 men were making the dust fly by throwing up a dirt parapet around the fort—making it impregnable to direct assault by an army equipped primarily with squirrel guns and shotguns. Wisdom being the better part of valor, Sibley chose to cross the Rio Grande below the fort, pass behind a black basaltic mesa on the east bank, and recross the Rio Grande above the fort near Valverde.

Standing on the porch of the commanding officer's quarters at Fort Craig, watching Sibley's army draw up about a mile away on February 16, was Colonel Canby. At age 44, he was a year younger than his opponent. One of the most able officers of the war, Canby was described by a member of the First Colorado volunteers as follows:

> General Canby is usually seen near the head of the column attended by his staff and a few mounted troopers as an escort. Tall and straight, coarsely dressed in citizen's clothes, his countenance hard and weather beaten, his chin covered with a heavy grizzly beard of 2 weeks growth, a cigar in his mouth which he never lights, using a pipe when he wishes to smoke, he certainly has an air of superiority, largely the gift of nature, though undoubtedly strengthened by long habits of command. His person is portly and commanding, his manner dignified and self-possessed, his whole appearance such as to inspire confidence and respect from his fellows.[1]

Both Sibley and Canby had fought bravely in the Mexican War, both had served in the Southwest, but Sibley was not a healthy campaigner, and more often than not, he hurried to his medical chest for "spirits" when the musket balls and round shot began to fly. Within months after the Valverde battle Sibley would be in disgrace and remembered in history only for the pyramid tent of frontier fame which he designed and which carried his name, whereas Canby was immediately promoted to general and recalled to Washington, D.C., to work in headquarters. He ultimately ended up accepting the last surrender of Confederate forces at New Orleans on May 26, 1865.

Although the Battle of Valverde resulted in the Union troops retiring to Fort Craig, leaving the Confederates in control of the field and free to continue their northward march, the loss of his wagon train and the lack of a clear victory at Glorieta on March 26–28, 1862, spelled the end of Sibley's western expansion of the Confederacy. At Valverde, the western most limit of this Confederate expansion, 68 Union troops and 36 or 41 Confederates were killed. Another 300 men were wounded in the two armies, many of whom later died of their wounds. As the Union army withdrew with its wounded to Fort Craig, Sibley's men spent a couple of days burying the dead and then moved to Socorro where they left their wounded. As the remaining troops left Socorro, some may have started to realize the futility of this mission—they only had five days of supplies and Sibley was planning to push on to Denver!

Sibley died a broken alcoholic in Fredricksburg, Virginia, on August 23, 1886, after having fought for the Khedive of Egypt as a General of the Artillery. After the Civil War Canby became the Commander of the Department of the Columbia. He died at the hands of the Modoc Indian Chief, Captain Jack, in northern California at a peace tent on April 11, 1873, the only general officer to die in the Indian Wars.

The papers in this volume fight and refight the Battle of Valverde, so I'll leave the tactics and strategies to others. The point of my paper is to acknowledge the Battle of Valverde and the role of Fort Craig as the beginning of the end for the Confederacy in the West. On behalf of the Bureau of Land Management, keeper of Fort Craig, thank you for your interest in the fort and its history. •

Note

1. Ovando J. Hollister, *Boldly They Rode: History of the 1st Colorado Regiment of Volunteers* (Golden Press, 1949).

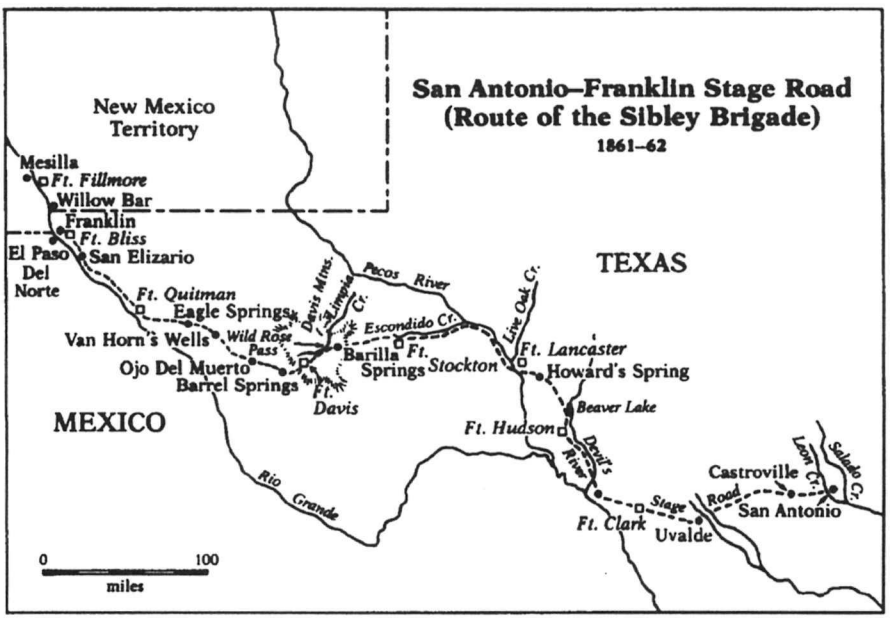


Figure 6.1
Route of Sibley's Brigade, 1861–1862
(from Alberts, 1993:23)

CHAPTER 6

Donald S. Frazier

Long Marches and Short Rations

THE ADVANCE OF SIBLEY'S BRIGADE ON VALVERDE



On November 10, 1861, a column of hundreds of men and horses that stretched out for miles wound its way along the dusty San Antonio–to–El Paso stage road while, nearby, a carriage climbed up a hill. The passing troops, shouldering their weapons in salute to the occupants of the vehicle, knew that the passenger inside was Brig. Gen. Henry Hopkins Sibley, who had promised them glory and adventure in the Far West if they first conquered New Mexico. Confident of the success that the men would bring him, themselves, and the Confederate States, Sibley took off his hat and returned the salute.[1]

By the time Sibley had been commissioned a brigadier general on June 17, 1861, the Confederacy had already moved to seize New Mexico. By July 1861, before First Manassas had been fought in Virginia, Texans from Lt. Col. John Robert Baylor's Second Texas Cavalry had captured and garrisoned all of the Federal posts in the western reaches of the state. On July 27, the 600-man garrison of Fort Fillmore surrendered, delivering a devastating blow to the Union defenses in the area and providing the Rebels with additional war materiel. Baylor knew, however, that to keep these gains, additional troops would be needed.[2]

Texas would provide the troops Baylor needed; upon Sibley's arrival in San Antonio in August 1861, he immediately began raising a brigade. Notices appeared in local newspapers as the general appointed captains who then returned to their home counties to raise companies. A variety of recruits—old Texas revolutionaries, Mexican War veterans, naive plowboys, adventurous clerks—flocked to the recently commissioned commanders. Without benefit of proper training or uniform equipage, the troops were then hurried to the brigade rendezvous on Salado Creek in San Antonio. Thirty companies organized into three regiments, designated the Fourth, Fifth, and Seventh Texas cavalries, constituted the new unit. Men from Guadalupe and Caldwell counties, reporting

on August 28, 1861, formed Company A, Fourth Texas Cavalry. The brigade was not completed until November 15, when a 100-man organization from Fort Worth took the oath of service and became Company K, Seventh Texas Cavalry.[3]

On October 23, 1861, with a slight autumn chill in the air, Sibley's Brigade began its march to New Mexico, Col. James Reily and the Fourth Texas Cavalry leading the way. This journey across Texas would provide many of the troops with their first exposure to soldiering, and morale was buoyant as the men left San Antonio. The excited warriors cheered as they passed in review, with "drums beating and flags flying, and every man, from the general downwards, confident of victory." Outside of town, the enthusiastic troops sang a sentimental ballad, "The Texas Ranger," as they began the trek.[4]

Because the waterholes along the route were small, Sibley divided his regiments into companies, marching a few days apart.[5] Two weeks later Col. Tom Green and the Fifth Texas Cavalry followed as the ladies of San Antonio "waved their white handkerchiefs." The mood was festive; Colonel Green passed Company I, composed of men from his adopted home town of La Grange, and exclaimed, "I will bet on the Fayette County boys!" adding to the troops' sense of pride.[6] Sibley, his staff, and escort left San Antonio on November 18. He overtook the Fifth Texas Cavalry along the Devils River, north of San Felipe Springs, and passed the Fourth Texas Cavalry at Fort Quitman. The general and his escort reached Franklin by December 14, establishing the headquarters of the Confederate Army of New Mexico at Fort Bliss.[7]

Portions of the Seventh Texas Cavalry, its men still drawing equipment, did not follow the rest of the brigade until November 28, when Lt. Col. John Schuyler Sutton led the first five equipped companies of the Seventh Texas Cavalry west. Four more companies departed December 18; Company K, serving as escort to the brigade paymaster, did not ride out of San Antonio until three months later.[8]

The brigade's route lay through some of the most inhospitable country in Texas, the gentle, rolling countryside west of San Antonio contrasting sharply with the rugged terrain north and west of San Felipe Springs. Near Uvalde, a soldier described the land as "pretty well timbered in places," inhabited by "rattlesnakes . . . in abundance." Upon reaching the Rio Grande, the troops followed the Devils River, crossing that stream several times within a few miles as the trail twisted through rocky canyons. The passage of hundreds of horses and men churned the powdery soil into billowing clouds of stifling dust. At Beaver Lake, a pond a few miles from Camp Hudson, the brigade moved northwest toward Fort Lancaster, with orders to "carry as much water as possible." Just past that post the Pecos River provided refreshment for the troops and their mounts. After following that "narrow, deep, muddy and crooked stream" a few miles, the brigade crossed over into the rugged wilderness of far West Texas.[9]



Figure 6.2 Brig. Gen. Henry H. Sibley
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 50541)

The command gradually made its way through the arid expanses of the Trans-Pecos, the men glad to arrive at the rare bodies of standing water in the region. Comanche Springs, one of the largest springs in the state, served the troops as they approached Fort Stockton. Leon Holes—a series of very deep pools formed by the collapse of several underground caverns—provided ample water for the separate companies as they angled southwest along Limpia Creek to Fort Davis. From here, the trail led across the dry, rugged landscape to the west until it dropped into the valley of the Rio Grande near Fort Quitman. From that point to Fort Bliss there was no shortage of water for men and horses.[10]

By December 17, elements of the brigade began to arrive in Franklin, making their bivouacs in the grassy, fertile Rio Grande valley. The scattered companies of Reily's Fourth Texas Cavalry had reunited and continued on to their encampments near Mesilla and Doña Ana in the Confederate Territory of Arizona. Colonel Green's regiment consolidated on January 3, 1862, having made the journey in just under two months. The first companies of the Seventh Texas, still a month behind, did not reach the Franklin area until the end of January.[11]

Like most new soldiers, Sibley's men lacked discipline; experienced and determined officers soon inured the troops to the dicta of military life. Extra duty, including chores like cutting wood, fell to many offenders. When three soldiers fell asleep on sentry duty, a court-martial sentenced them to "close confinement upon bread and water for ten days." Insubordination was also a problem. Some recruits did not respect their officers' pronouncements, leading to a number of fistfights. One of these occurred less than two weeks into the trip when Pvt. John Quinn struck his captain. A court-martial sentenced Quinn to wear "heavy irons one month and while on the march to be tied to [the] hind end of [a] baggage wagon and [thus] be compelled to travel on foot." All of these offenders, however, had their punishments remitted as a gesture of mercy from their commanders.[12]

As the march progressed, the men began to wear on one another's nerves; friction often sparked into violence. As their unit neared Franklin, two soldiers in the Fifth Texas Cavalry started throwing punches and were quickly arrested. After reaching New Mexico, another soldier noted the beating that one soldier took, "knocking him senseless for a time." Some soldiers took personal differences more seriously, as did thirty-six-year-old Pvt. Michael Behen, alias "Thomas Harvey," of Green's regiment. On December 18, Behen shot and killed the company farrier, eighteen-year-old James Tobin, after an argument at El Muerto Spring. On January 11, after reaching Fort Bliss, the entire regiment watched as eight soldiers, executing a court-martial sentence, put bullets through the murderer's chest.[13]

The march, drill, and training gradually matured the troops, turning the recruits into soldiers. A bugler in each company kept the daily schedule, and regular guard duty allowed the men to become accustomed to the army. As officers attempted to make the men proud of their growing military competence, several companies were pronounced the "best" in various categories. "This morning our company was praised by the Major as the best drilled company," a young German in Company B, Fifth Texas Cavalry, boasted. "Major Lockridge . . . pronounced us the best dressed and best looking company in the field," wrote a trooper in Company I of the same regiment. A youthful soldier in Company H, Fourth Texas Cavalry, wrote to his father in Nacogdoches, "I am told that our company is the best mounted and the best armed of any in the brigade."[14]

Through training, officers sought to weld the men into an efficient unit, but the arms and equipment issued to the brigade varied greatly in quality and uniformity. Weapons included shotguns, hunting rifles, confiscated Federal smoothbore and rifled muskets, revolvers, single-shot saddle pistols, a scattering of swords, large knives, and even lances. Haversacks, canvas bags carried across the shoulder for rations and personal gear, had been issued just days before the brigade left San Antonio. A variety of tents were also supplied, including some of

a conical design invented by General Sibley in the 1850s after he observed Comanche tepees on the plains west of Fort Worth. The clothing issued also varied greatly, with some companies drawing "a full military suit, coat, pants, drawers, pantaloon boots, [and] coats—broadcloth with brass buttons." Other groups had to rely on the charity of home folks. Officers allowed each soldier fifteen pounds of personal gear carried in the company wagons; when the baggage train arrived late, men often spent a miserable, blanketless night. One soldier, lamenting his lack of adequate clothing, wrote, "I have nothing but a saddle blanket and as it is a cold night, I stay up trying [not] to freeze over a green mesquite fire, filling my hands with thorns."[15]

An erratic commissary added to the discomfort of the march, but the resourceful soldiers managed to keep themselves fed. Hispanic contractors drove large beef herds along with the unit, but the troops soon became bored just poor beef and "wormy crackers." In the more settled areas of their journey, the men quickly learned to rely on their own ingenuity for supplemental rations. At the little village of D'Hanis, just west of San Antonio, local women ran to greet the Confederate column with butter, eggs, chickens, and watermelons. Near Castroville, a group of officers traded government coffee to an Alsatian immigrant for butter, cheese, and milk. As the brigade continued westward, the towns and their supplemental provisions disappeared, and the troops "found [themselves] obliged to take anything that chanced along." A week into the journey, one soldier wrote of eating hawk for breakfast.[16]

The forts that lay along the route always provided a welcome sight, since good flour or at least feed corn could be found. At Fort Lancaster, troops feasted on flapjacks. At another post, "sop and biscuits" was on the menu. At Fort Quitman, creative soldiers ground corn from the stables in their coffee grinders to make meal for bread. As the brigade passed through the Mexican settlements around Franklin, the fare improved, with one soldier happily gobbling "spare ribs and fried eggs for . . . supper and breakfast."[17]

In spite of the long march, mundane drill, and bad food, many of the troops found that the New Mexico campaign offered excitement and adventure on a scale never before imagined. Most of the men kept themselves entertained by pursuing a number of new diversions. Even before the companies left San Antonio, the soldiers had engaged in sham battles. Once on the road toward San Felipe Springs, the men took great pleasure in hunting "Mexican hogs," described by one private as "a grizzly, savage, one hundred and twenty pound institution." They also enjoyed catching trout and other fish in the numerous creeks they crossed. When nearing the Rio Grande, a number of the recruits, like excited schoolboys, rode ahead to catch a glimpse of Mexico. Upon reaching Fort Quitman, an entire company crossed the river to ride along the Chihuahua side,

supposedly because of better grass. Pvt. Seth Platner of the Fifth Texas Cavalry apparently enjoyed Mexico too much—angry townspeople killed him after he shot a woman in El Paso.[18]

The volunteers also followed old routines on the march. Since the stage line was still operating, many soldiers wrote frequent letters home. The men also tended to their spiritual welfare, as preaching and Bible reading remained a part of the soldiers' weekly schedules. Capt. Hiram Mack Burrows of the Seventh Texas Cavalry, an ordained Methodist Episcopal minister, delivered a sermon to his men and the garrison of Fort Lancaster when his unit passed by that post on January 21, 1862. Mundane chores also had to be performed, with washday coming about every ten days or whenever a usable source of water permitted.[19]

When a sutler arrived at Fort Davis, the men sought alternative entertainment in his liquor stock and "got tight." Capt. Charles E. Buckholts of Company E, Fourth Texas Cavalry and his regimental commander, Colonel Reily, were seen to lag behind the rest of the column as they "tanked up considerably."[20] Another vice, gambling, prevailed among the soldiers, with "wrestling and horse races" consuming much of their spare time.[21]

Large droves of cattle, brigade mounts, and draft animals constituted a critical part of the brigade, and their numbers dwindled as the march progressed. Before the brigade even departed for the west, some soldiers lost their mounts, chiefly owing to carelessness. The herds and baggage trains, called "Mexico" by the soldiers, were guarded, but not very well. Early in the trip, most of the beef cattle and work oxen of the Fifth Texas Cavalry wandered away. By November 9, many of the brigade mounts were also missing, and details searched the surrounding wilderness. Even Colonel Green lost his horse. In the dark hours of New Year's Day, his Negro servant stole his mare, splashing across the Rio Grande to freedom. By the time the brigade began to reassemble around Franklin, scores of men were on foot.[22]

The march across Texas had not been without human cost; fresh graves marked the route the brigade had taken. Even in San Antonio the hospitals filled with men, and those who could not travel when their company departed had to transfer to the Seventh Texas Cavalry. Fourteen days into the journey, the Fifth Texas Cavalry left several sick men at the Fort Clark hospital, one of whom died. Company E of the Seventh regiment also stayed at Fort Clark, while fifteen of its number died from measles. Near Fort Davis, Sgt. J. N. Tucker of Company F, Fifth Texas Cavalry, collapsed from an unknown disease. R. J. Hill, a fifty-nine-year-old private in the same company, succumbed to pneumonia when his unit reached Fort Quitman. A military funeral at Fort Bliss, complete with volleys fired over the grave, marked the end of the military career of Pvt. David Moore, Company I, Fifth Texas Cavalry, after he too died from an undiagnosed illness.

Smallpox appeared among the Mexicans in El Paso, but regimental surgeons quickly vaccinated many of the troops to avoid an outbreak in the command. Although good health prevailed among most companies during the journey, many of the troops had a rattling cough that later proved deadly.[23]

By the beginning of 1862, the brigade began to assemble preparatory to a push into the interior. Sibley ordered his forces concentrated at Fort Thorn, forty miles north of Mesilla and ninety miles south of the Federals at Fort Craig. The Fourth Texas Cavalry arrived in the middle of January, followed shortly by Colonel Green and the Fifth Texas Cavalry. Sibley then established a hospital and supply depot as his troops made their camps. While the general organized his headquarters for offensive operations, other brigade officers held skirmish drills and reestablished camp routines.[24]

While the brigade waited for orders that would launch the offensive, disease and disability ravaged the command. Company I, Fifth Texas Cavalry camped close by the hospital established by Sibley at Fort Thorn because, as a private observed, "most of the men in [the] company are sick, dead, [or] discharged." Pneumonia was the most feared killer, even above smallpox, which also began to spread among the men. As disillusioned soldiers buried their comrades, the muddy water of the Rio Grande received the blame for the sickness in camp. In addition to disease, bored soldiers "practicing" with their pistols also added to hospital lists by carelessly shooting themselves with their own weapons.[25]

But for the first time since leaving San Antonio, the troops found nothing to complain about from the commissary department, as the men received plenty to eat, drink, and smoke. Sibley had amassed a month's worth of "groceries" to sustain the campaign at Fort Thorn. Sutlers also had arrived, selling preserved fruits, candy, raisins, tobacco, pipes, and other items to the soldiers. This respite from hunger was only temporary, however, and further supplies were expected to be taken from the enemy.[26]

Soldiers also bought up the sutlers' stocks of "liquors of all brands." Imbibing soon spread through the command, and for a week after the traders arrived, inebriated soldiers could be seen stumbling around regimental streets as "drinking went on by the whole sale." General Sibley, the troops rumored, was also well acquainted with the bottle. His chronic illness may have been owing to, or a reason for, his drinking; whatever the relationship, this illness would cause the general to turn over command of the Army of New Mexico to subordinates on several occasions.[27]

The Texans also used their time trying to supplement or replace equipment. A number of troops had lost most of what they owned when a prairie fire swept through their camp. Some were able to acquire new weapons from captured stores. One of the three lancer companies traded their "spears" for guns,

although the entire command was short of ammunition. The men enjoyed their first payday since San Antonio on January 7, 1862, and troops stood in lines outside the dwellings of the newly arrived sutlers at Fort Thorn to spend their government pay on trousers and other clothing.[28]

Another problem that began to plague the Confederates was horse stealing by Apaches who constantly raided the camps. On at least one occasion the marauders burned several wagons, but their principal quarry was horses. By covering themselves with oil and then "wallowing in the dirt and grass," the raiders could remain undetected along the ground at night "like a horned frog," waiting for the pickets to walk to the farthest points of their beats. Then the Indians would slip into the remuda, cut halters and ropes, and make off with a herd. Troops unsuccessfully pursued one group, which had stolen 160 horses and mules, as far as the Organ Mountains, fifty miles east of Mesilla. Sentries did manage to kill a number of warriors during these raids; the body of one such casualty was dissected by fascinated brigade surgeons. But despite the death of an occasional raider, horses continued to disappear as long as the command remained in Apache territory.[29]



Figure 6.3
Organ Mountains from Paraje de San Diego
(photo Christine Preston)

With supplies dwindling and the weather growing worse, Sibley finally launched his offensive on February 7, 1862. After a hard march in freezing weather, the Texans attempted to draw the Federals out from behind the defenses of Fort Craig. After nine days of skirmishes and scouting, however, the Union troops remained firm behind their stout earthen walls. Disappointed, Sibley ordered his men withdrawn several miles while alternatives were considered.

Once the men were in their camps, officers discovered how hard the march from Fort Thorn to Fort Craig had been on the command. Many of the men seemed to have lost enthusiasm for the campaign. Around the campfires, soldiers sat "cursing the army, some cursing the Confederacy." The increasingly cold and inclement weather also bothered the men, as "dust [flew] so thick that it [was] impossible to see a horse fifty yards away." One homesick trooper lamented, "This evening was spent in reminiscences of by-gone days. The day is cold and cloudy, looks . . . like snow. I was on guard day and night. This day will be long remembered by me should I live to be an old man." There was also friction between the enlisted men and their company commanders, who had been appointed by Sibley instead of being elected by their volunteer commands. A number of the line officers resigned under pressure and returned home. The presence of scores of sick and dying men also sapped morale. "The boys in the company are very much down in the mouth," complained one soldier. "The Captain is disheartened at seeing so many men getting sick and dying." One soldier, feeling the hardships he had already endured in New Mexico, complained, "This country will be a tax to any government to which it may belong. It is one of the roughest countries that ever I saw or ever expect to see."[30]

With morale starting to ebb, Green and the now-recovered Sibley knew they had to force an engagement. After waiting two days for a dust storm to subside, the Confederates crossed the icy Rio Grande on February 19 at the tiny village of Paraje and ascended the basaltic ledges above. Two days later the army descended the sandy slope that led to the cottonwood-bordered ford called Valverde.[31] •

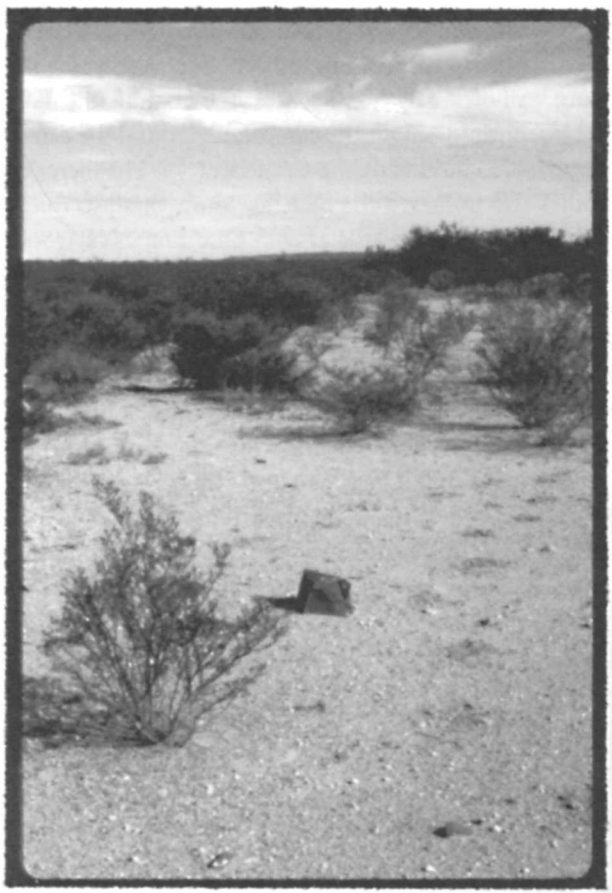


Figure 6.4
Jornada del Muerto south of Engle
(photo Dan Scurlock, Wingswept Research)

Notes

1. William Randolph Howell Diary, 10 November 1861, William Randolph Howell Papers, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter cited as BTHC): Walter A. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico: The Journal of William Henry Smith," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book* 27 (October 1951), p. 115.
2. John R. Baylor to T. A. Washington, 21 September 1861, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* Series I, Vol. IV (Gettysburg: The National Historical Society, 1972), pp. 17–20.
3. Theophilus Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi: Being a History of the Old Sibley Brigade from Its First Organization to the Present Times; Its Campaigns in New Mexico Arizona, Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas in the Years 1861–2–3–4,* Martin Hardwick Hall and Edwin Adams Davis, eds. (Houston: Stagecoach Press, 1961), pp. 10–12; Martin Hardwick Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960), pp. 35–36; Don Alberts, ed., *Rebels on the Rio Grande: The Civil War Journal of A. B. Peticolas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 17–18; Jerry Thompson, *Henry Hopkins Sibley: Confederate General of the West* (Natchitoches, Louisiana: Northwestern State University Press, 1987), pp. 222–224; Martin Hardwick Hall, *The Confederate Army of New Mexico* (Austin: Presidial Press, 1978), pp. 61–62, 281.
4. R. H. Williams, *With the Border Ruffians: Memories of the Far West, 1852–1868,* notes by Arthur J. Mayer and Joseph W. Snell (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1982), p. 201; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* p. 15.
5. "The Diary of Julius Gieseke, 1861–1862," trans. by Oscar Haas, *Military History of Texas and the Southwest* 18 (October 1988): 50; Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign,* pp. 41–42; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* p. 16; at Leon Creek, seven miles west of San Antonio, the Fourth Texas split up, with two companies (A and F), along with the regiment's small battery of mountain howitzers, leading the van under the command of Major Henry Raguet of Nacogdoces. The following day Lt. Col. William Read Scurry and four companies (B, D, G, and H) departed, followed by the remainder of the regiment (companies C, E, I, and K) under Colonel Reily the next morning.
6. Walter A. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 115; Howell Diary, 7 November 1861; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* pp. 15, 17; Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign,* pp. 41–43.
7. Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign,* p. 44; Thompson, *Sibley,* p. 237.
8. Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 50; Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign,* pp. 41–45; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* pp. 16–18; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 115; Howell Diary, 7 November 1861; Thompson, *Sibley,* p. 237; Hall, *The Confederate Army of New Mexico,* pp. 21–23. Lt. Col. John Schuyler Sutton, who had first made the trip to New Mexico as a captain in the Texan Santa Fe Expedition of 1841, led companies A, B, F, H, and I westward. Companies C, D, E, and G departed December 18.
9. Howell Diary, 15, 25, 27 November and 3 December 1861; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 115; Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke 1861–1862," p. 50.

10. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 123; Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign,* pp. 49–50; Wayne R. Austerman, *Sharps Rifles and Spanish Mules: The San Antonio–El Paso Mail, 1851–1881* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1985), pp. 7–8.
11. Faulkner, ed. "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 124; Hall, *Army of New Mexico,* p. 23; Alberts, ed., *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* p. 29.
12. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 117; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* p. 17; Robert Thomas Williams Diary, 17 January 1862, typescript in the Fourth Texas Cavalry file, Harold B. Simpson Confederate Research Center, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas.
13. Howell Diary, 18 November 1861; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 122; Hall, *Army of New Mexico,* pp. 188–189; Williams Diary, 13 and 30–31 January 1862.
14. David B. Gracy, II, ed., "The New Mexico Campaign Letters of Frank Starr, 1861–1862," *Texas Military History* 4 (Fall 1964):171; Joseph Faust to Hermann Seele, 1 November 1861, Joseph Faust Papers (hereinafter cited as Faust Papers) BTHC; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," pp. 114–116; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* pp. 12–14.
15. Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* pp. 13–15; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 114; Joseph Faust to Hermann Seele, 1 November 1861, Faust Papers. For a reference to lances see Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 53; Howell Diary, 28 November 1861; Gracy, ed., "The New Mexico Campaign Letters of Frank Starr," p. 171. The three lancer companies were G, Fourth Texas Cavalry, and B and G, Fifth Texas Cavalry.
16. Howell Diary, 12 November 1861.
17. Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 50, 51; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 112; Howell Diary, 3, 8, 11–12 December 1861.
18. Hall, *Army of New Mexico,* p. 183; Howell Diary, 11–12 December 1861.
19. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 114, 117, 123; Howell Diary, 25 November 1861; W. W. Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days in the Confederate Army: A Journal Kept by W. W. Heartsill for Four Years, One Month and One Day, or Camp Life; Day by Day, of the W. P. Lane Rangers from April 19, 1861 to May 20, 1865,* Bell Irvin Wiley, ed. (Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Co. 1987), pp. 49, 51; Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 50; Howell Diary, 20 November 1861; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," pp. 117, 123.
20. Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 52; Howell Diary, 15 December 1861.
21. Williams Diary, 1, 2, 4 February 1862.
22. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," pp. 115, 117, 123; Howell Diary, 25–26 November 1861; Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 53.
23. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," pp. 120–124; Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days,* pp. 48, 51; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* p. 18, Howell Diary, 30 December 1861 and 7, 9, 11 January 1862; Hall, *Army of New Mexico,* p. 182; Williams Diary, 6 January 1862.
24. Thompson, *Sibley,* pp. 239–240; Hall, *Army of New Mexico,* p. 23; Alberts, ed., *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* pp. 31–32, 42; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the*

Mississippi, pp. 18, 20–21; Howell Diary, 7 February 1862; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 125.

25. Faulkner ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," pp. 127–128; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* pp. 21, 24; Williams Diary, 26 December 1961, 6, 9, 16 January and 19 February 1862.
26. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 125; Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 55; Howell Diary, 15 February 1862; Hanna Diary, 10 February 1862, Holbrook Collection; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* pp. 23–24.
27. Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* p. 23; Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 55; Thompson, *Sibley,* pp. 252, 311; Williams Diary, 9 February 1862.
28. Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke" pp. 55–56; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 123; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* p. 24; Hanna Diary, 13 February 1862; Williams Diary, 26 January 1862.
29. Howell Diary, 16 January 1862; Felix Robert Collard, Reminiscences of a Private, Company "G", Seventh Texas Cavalry, Sibley Brigade, C.S.A., typescript in possession of Dr. Don Alberts, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 54; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi,* p. 20; Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," p. 126; Williams Diary, 11–12 January 1862.
30. Faulkner, ed., "With Sibley in New Mexico," pp. 122, 127–129; Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," pp. 54–55.
31. Haas, trans., "The Diary of Julius Gieseke," p. 54; Gracy, ed., "The New Mexico Campaign Letters of Frank Starr," p. 173; Alberts, ed., *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* pp. 41–42.



Figure 7.1
Gen. Edward R. S. Canby, ca. 1863
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 54169)

CHAPTER 7

Lt. Col. Conrad Crane, U.S. Army

A Careful Examination of the Field of Battle

MILITARY LESSONS FROM THE BATTLE OF VALVERDE



After Waterloo, *the Duke of Wellington wrote, "The history of a battle is not unlike the history of a ball. Some individuals may recall all the little events of which the great result is the battle won or lost; but no individual can recollect the order in which, or the exact moment at which they occurred, which makes all the difference as to their value or importance."*[1] *The 1862 Battle of Valverde had nothing like the scale or complexity of a Waterloo, but assembling the pieces of the action in New Mexico on February 21, 1862, into a coherent pattern can indeed be difficult. The attempt is well worth the effort, however, as the military lessons to be gleaned from this engagement are more numerous than one would expect from a battle of its size.*[2]

Setting the Scene

In many ways the Battle of Valverde is unique in the annals of the American Civil War. While the units engaged at the tactical level were only of brigade size, they were also theater armies, with the operational level missions inherent in any major campaign. The Confederate failure to conquer New Mexico can be directly attributed to their failure to link tactical and operational objectives. They could win battles, but lost the campaign. Only recently has the American Army really begun to appreciate the operational level of war, primarily as a result of a similar failure on its part in Vietnam.[3]

Also as in Vietnam, United States forces at Valverde were involved in a coalition with indigenous defenders (see Figure 7.2 on Union Order of Battle).[4] The racial, cultural, and language differences between Union troops and their New Mexico allies were considerable and resulted in prejudice and poor communication. The Union commander, Col. Edward R. S. Canby, recognized that the native soldiers were strongly prejudiced against Anglo Americans and even feared that they would not accept orders from Regular Army officers he

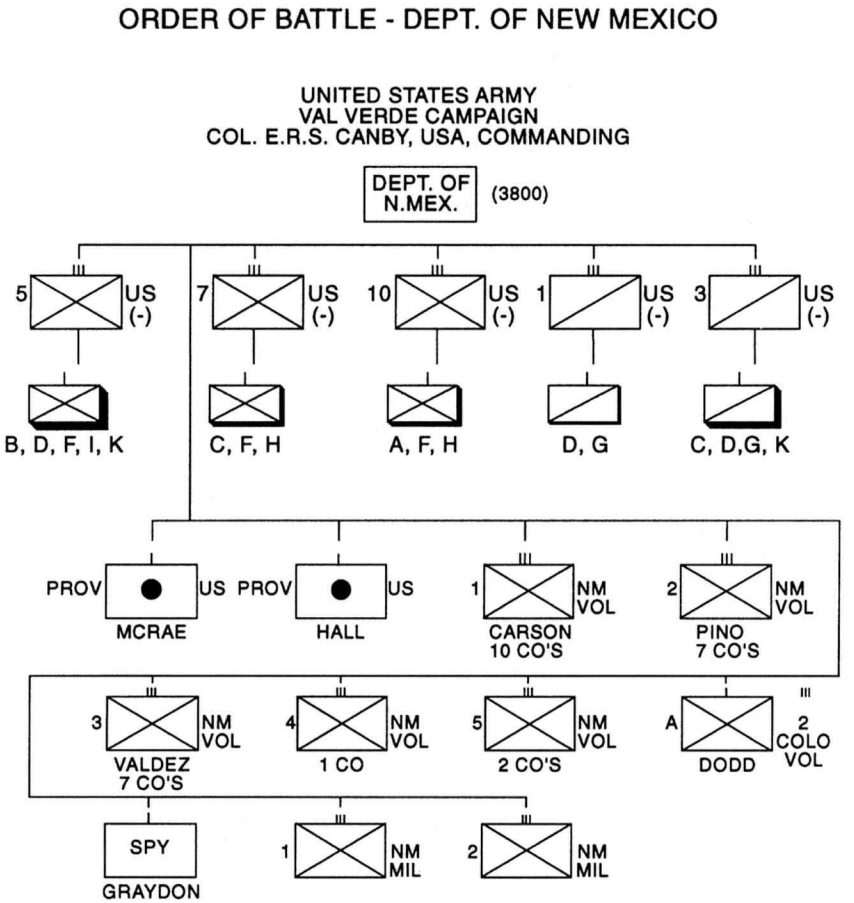


Figure 7.2

might choose to appoint over them. He did manage to appoint some "Americans" as officers in volunteer companies, but this step did little to resolve racial animosities.[5] Few of the New Mexicans spoke English, and most English-speaking soldiers on both sides looked down on the natives as inferior "greasers."[6] New Mexico Volunteers faced discrimination on matters such as pay, quarters, and cavalry mounts. The Second New Mexico Volunteer Regiment had already mutinied over arrears in pay, and some soldiers from the First Regiment deserted on the eve of the battle when their horses were confiscated by the army.[7]

New Mexico soldiers were often impoverished laborers who had joined the army to escape peonage. Some were even purchased from jails by enrolling officers or impressed into service.[8] The volunteers and militia were not trained or equipped as well as the Union regulars, and their leaders, especially at company grade, were very mixed in quality.[9] Though he used them fairly well in combat, in raids as well as the battle, Canby did not really trust his New Mexicans. His concerns over their unreliability were shared by other Regular Army officers in the theater, as well as by reputable local officers like Cols. "Kit" Carson and Ceran St. Vrain.[10] The majority of New Mexicans held their own at Valverde, though it can be argued that they did not do as well as the regulars. In fact, it is probably most correct to consider the performance of New Mexicans at Valverde as typical for volunteer regiments during the Civil War. They performed at Valverde as similar Union units did in their first major combat at First Bull Run or Shiloh, with a mixture of heroism and cowardice.

Canby was lucky in that a large percentage of his forces were Regular Army, probably the greatest proportion of such troops in any Union army in the Civil War. They were well equipped with the most modern weapons the army had to offer: the U.S. Army Rifle Musket M-1855 for the infantry and the Harper's Ferry Rifle, Colt Navy Pistol, and Sharp's and Maynard's carbines for the cavalry. These could outgun the pistols and shotguns of Sibley's poorly armed Texans, just as the 12–pounder Napoleon Gun Howitzers in McRae's provisional battery and the 24–pounder Howitzers in Hall's provisional battery could overpower the 12–pounder Mountain Howitzers and 6–pounder Napoleons of the Confederates.[11]

Armament was not the only logistical shortcoming of Brig. Gen. Henry H. Sibley's forces (see Figure 7.3 on Confederate Order of Battle). His troops lacked winter clothing, food and fodder, and any real logistics plan. It is hard to imagine how anyone with as much experience serving in the Southwest as Sibley could expect a brigade to live off the land in New Mexico. Besides the discomfort it caused his troops, Sibley's logistical shortsightedness made the capture of the Union forts and their stores essential for the success of his campaign.[12]

Another Union advantage was in intelligence. Canby knew that Sibley had to capture the forts; Graydon's spy company was very effective, and the civil populace would respond to native soldiers or Union money. In contrast, the Texans were hated and feared by many of the civilians, and the depredations of Arizona Volunteers, mostly Anglos from the area around Mesilla and Pinos Altos, or from Santa Fe, increased Sibley's public relations problems.[13] Despite the fact that the Texans were mounted, they never seemed to master the normal cavalry intelligence functions, perhaps because Indians often picked off patrols or because the Texans were not trained as true cavalrymen.[14] Canby always seemed to know what the Confederates were doing, while Sibley always appeared to be in the dark

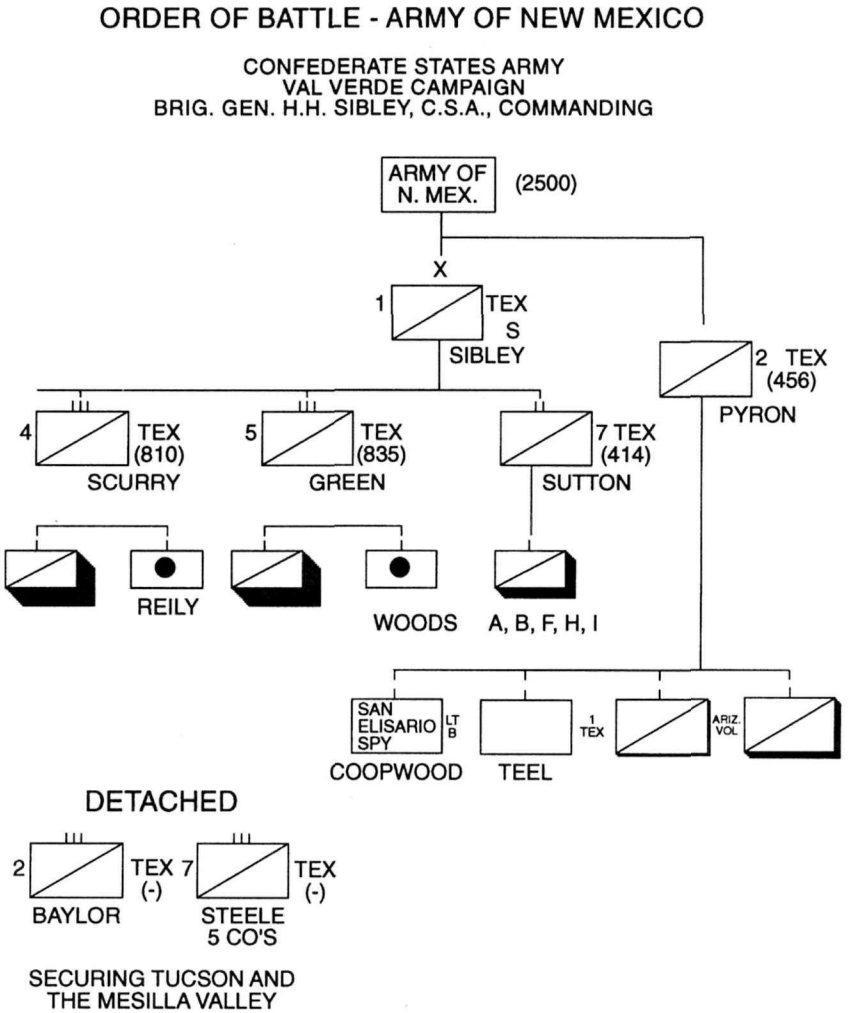


Figure 7.3

about Union intentions. Even two days after the Texans reached the vicinity of Fort Craig on February 13, Canby was able to receive seventy wagons full of supplies, undiscovered by the Confederates. Capture by the Confederates of that lightly guarded wagon train, "laden with grub which we need, you bet," as a Colorado Volunteer confided to his diary, could have changed the outcome of the whole campaign.[15]

After a series of skirmishes around Fort Craig between February 13 and 16, Sibley faced a dilemma.[16] He always seemed to expect the best, and a subordinate criticized him for being "too prone to let the morrow take care of itself."[17] Canby, who did not want to have to maneuver his New Mexicans under fire and who knew that he really did not have to fight a battle to win the campaign, would not let Texan feints lure him out of his bastion at Fort Craig.[18] As long as Canby held the fort, he could retain control of the Rio Grande Valley and its assets and deny logistical support to his enemy. Sibley had no alternate plan once his ruses failed and the Confederates were running low on supplies.

At this juncture, as at other critical times throughout the campaign, Sibley was "stricken by an unidentified illness as well as by indecision," and his primary subordinate Col. Thomas Green, took the initiative to develop his own operation. Green took the Confederate army south of Fort Craig to Paraje, where they crossed the Rio Grande and moved north. He hoped to recross again in the vicinity of Valverde, bypassing the fort and threatening its lines of communication with Santa Fe.

Green hoped to force Canby to fight in the open.[19] The Confederates were confident that they could easily rout any New Mexico troops that opposed them, and they had a more than two-to-one advantage in manpower over the Union regulars. Battle in the open would also give the Confederates the advantage of mobility. Their entire force was mounted, while only five troops of regular cavalry and some few volunteer and militia units were mounted on the Union side. It must be remembered, however, that the goal of the battle was not just for the Texans to defeat the Union troops, they had to achieve a victory decisive enough to cause Fort Craig to fall, as well.

The Confederate movement was readily observed from Fort Craig and by Union observers on Mesa del Contadero, commonly called Black Mesa, and Canby knew the difficulties of movement through the lava flows on the east side of the river. He used his militia to harass the Texan trains, and posted regular and volunteer infantry on the east side of the river to secure high ground that might be used to bombard the fort. On February 20, Canby saw an opportunity to assault the extended Confederate flank and perhaps end the campaign. He deployed his regular infantry and the First and Second New Mexico Volunteer Regiments for the attack but was thwarted by Confederate shelling when the inexperienced Second New Mexico, "being wholly unaccustomed to artillery firing, was thrown into confusion from which it was found impossible to extricate it."[20] Col. Miguel Pino's troops never recovered from their disastrous initiation to real combat.

Canby did gain some benefits from this aborted attack and from Paddy Graydon's famous "mule bomb" expedition that night. Two hundred

Confederate horses ran away to the river for water and were captured. Not only did this loss restrict the mobility of the Confederate trains, it also informed Canby that the Texans, in a dry camp behind the Black Mesa, were in dire need of water.[21] The effects of this intelligence, as well as the demoralization of the Second New Mexico Volunteers and loss of Texan mounts, would have important repercussions the next day.

The Battle Begins

On the morning of February 21, the Texans made a feint against Fort Craig to disguise their movement north to the ford at Valverde (Figure 7.4). Canby was not fooled, and he sent out Col. Benjamin Roberts with all the Union cavalry, consisting of five regular companies from the First and Third U.S. Cavalry and four mounted volunteer companies from the First and Third New Mexico. In further support, Canby dispatched, to follow Roberts, two sections of McRae's battery and all of Hall's, along with two regular and two volunteer infantry companies.[22]

Canby may have been influenced to send out his column by the presence of the governor of New Mexico, Henry Connelly, at Fort Craig. The governor aimed to stiffen the resolve of his militia and see a Union victory, so he had proceeded to the front lines.[23] Under the observation of the governor, it would have been difficult for Canby to let the Confederates head north without some resistance. In his after-action report, Canby stated that he sent Roberts out to "occupy and hold the ford."

It is unclear whether the Union commander really wanted a major confrontation, since Canby did not inform his subordinates of his plans before the battle. He had task-organized march columns for action, but when Roberts asked his commander what he was going to do with them, Canby replied, "when boots and saddles blows you will know and then I'll expect you to be ready to strike."[24] By not taking his subordinates into his confidence, Canby created the potential for misunderstanding of his intentions. During the early stages of Union deployment a series of such misunderstandings did occur and the intent of operations was altered as orders passed down the chain of command.

Roberts understood that his objective was "to watch the movement of General Sibley's Confederate forces, supposed to be attempting to reach the river near Valverde, and to prevent their effecting that object." That was quite an expanded mission from just holding the ford. Roberts had been the commanding officer of Fort Craig for some months, and by his own account he had made a "careful examination" of the Valverde field. Based on these observations, he had developed a plan to seize a key grove of cottonwood trees on the east side of the ford. By anchoring his line there with artillery, he could sweep an enemy out of

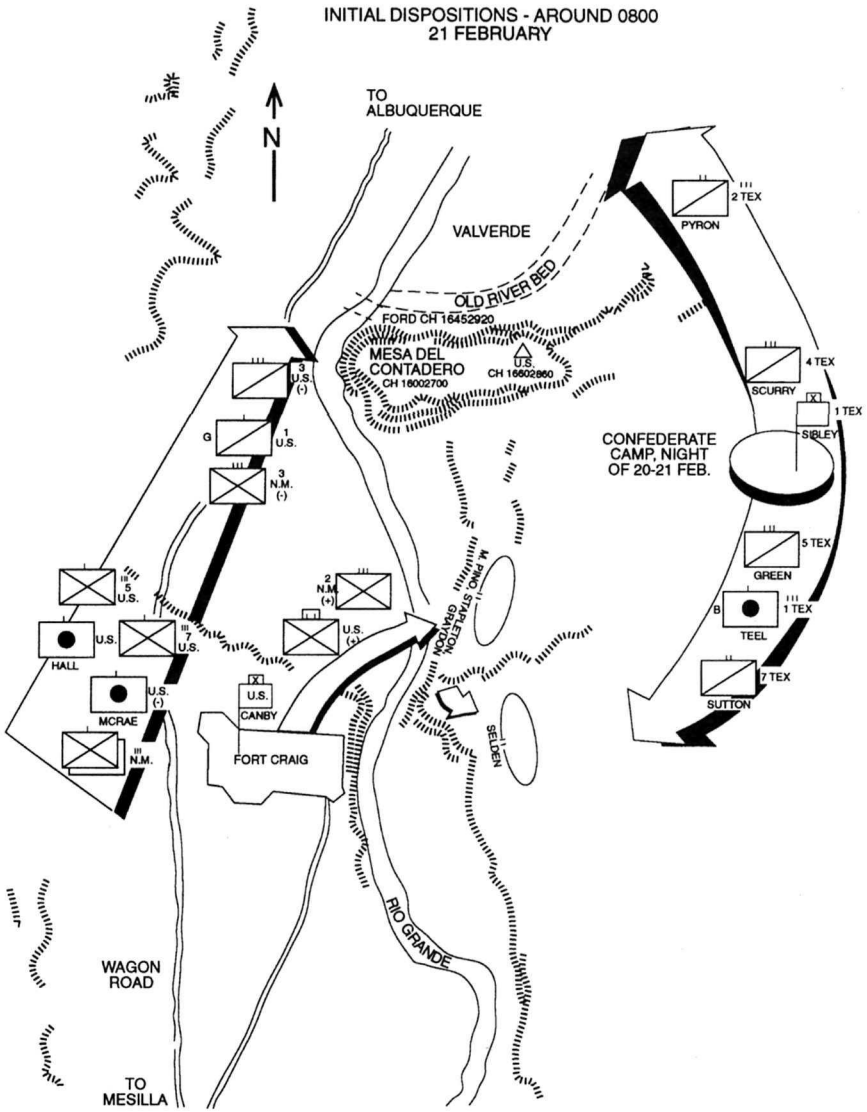

INITIAL DISPOSITIONS - AROUND 0800
21 FEBRUARY
TO
ALBUQUERQUE
N
VALVERDE
OLD RIVER BED
FORD CH 16452920
MESA DEL
CONTADERO
CH 16002700
CH 16502860
PYRON
2 TEX
4 TEX
SCURRY
1 TEX
SIBLEY
CONFEDERATE
CAMP, NIGHT
OF 20-21 FEB.
5 TEX
GREEN
1 TEX
TEEL
7 TEX
SUTTON
3
U.S.
(-)
G
1
U.S.
3
N.M.
(-)
III
5
U.S.
U.S.
HALL
III
7
U.S.
U.S.
(-)
MCRAE
III
N.M.
2
N.M.
(+)
U.S.
(+)
U.S.
CANBY
FORT CRAIG
M PHO STAPLETON
GRAYSON
SELDEN
RIO GRANDE
WAGON
ROAD
TO
MESILLA

Figure 7.4

the natural trench of the old riverbed and off the field. By pursuing this plan, Roberts initiated the battle that Canby had refused to give the Confederates earlier. Perhaps Roberts felt that, with the limited mobility of Union forces, he could not afford to let the Texans get farther away. Or perhaps he believed that fighting on terrain with which he was familiar, where he controlled the only ford, where he was supported by the nearby fort, and when his opponents had severe logistical problems, was the best course. Or it may be that Roberts deserved his reputation as a "rash old fighter"[25] and just wanted a battle. Whatever the motivation, Roberts's actions precipitated the Battle of Valverde.

When Roberts sent Maj. Thomas Duncan and his cavalry to seize the key grove across the river, more communication problems developed. Duncan believed that his primary mission was "to prevent the enemy from reaching the water." As a secondary goal, he was to hold the key portion of the bosque, if

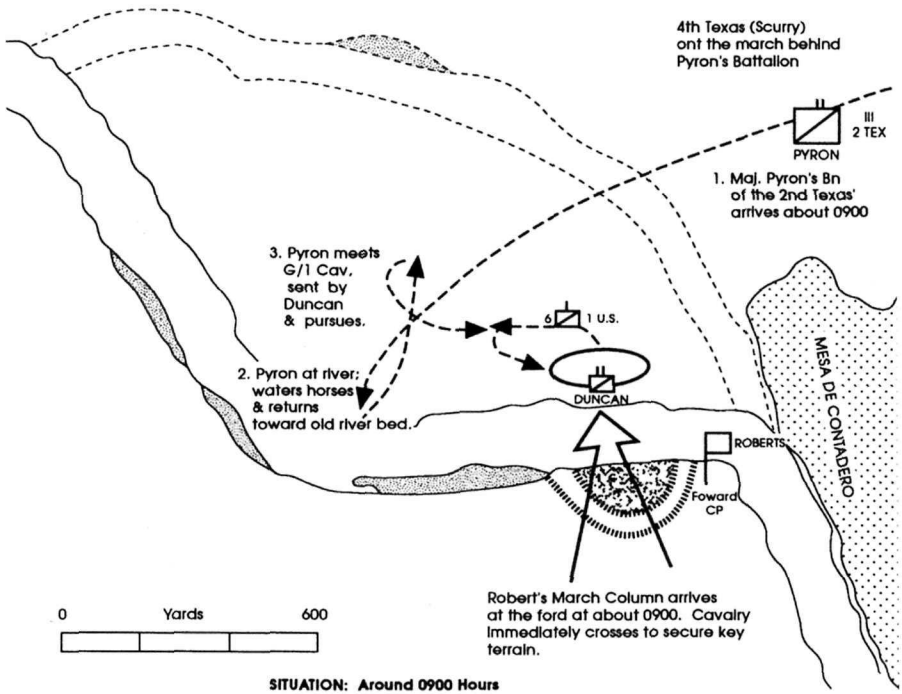


Figure 7.5

possible. Later accounts of the battle written in the East echoed Duncan's idea that the battle was fought to deny the Texans water. Indeed, Indian Agent James L. Collins, traveling with Governor Connelly, thought the purpose of the operation was "to meet the enemy and drive him from the water."[26]

After an initial skirmish with the Confederate advanced guard, the battle began in earnest (Figure 7.5). Reinforcements from both sides marched toward the sound of the guns. As more Texans arrived, they deployed to their right in a line behind a series of sand ridges. Duncan responded by stretching his own troops, now dismounted, to his left, continuing to stay between the Confederates and the river, but pulling the Union forces away from the key grove of trees on their right. An infuriated Roberts and a confused Duncan exchanged messengers until Roberts finally came forward from his position on high ground overlooking the field, deployed Union artillery to clear the Texans out of the trees, and secured

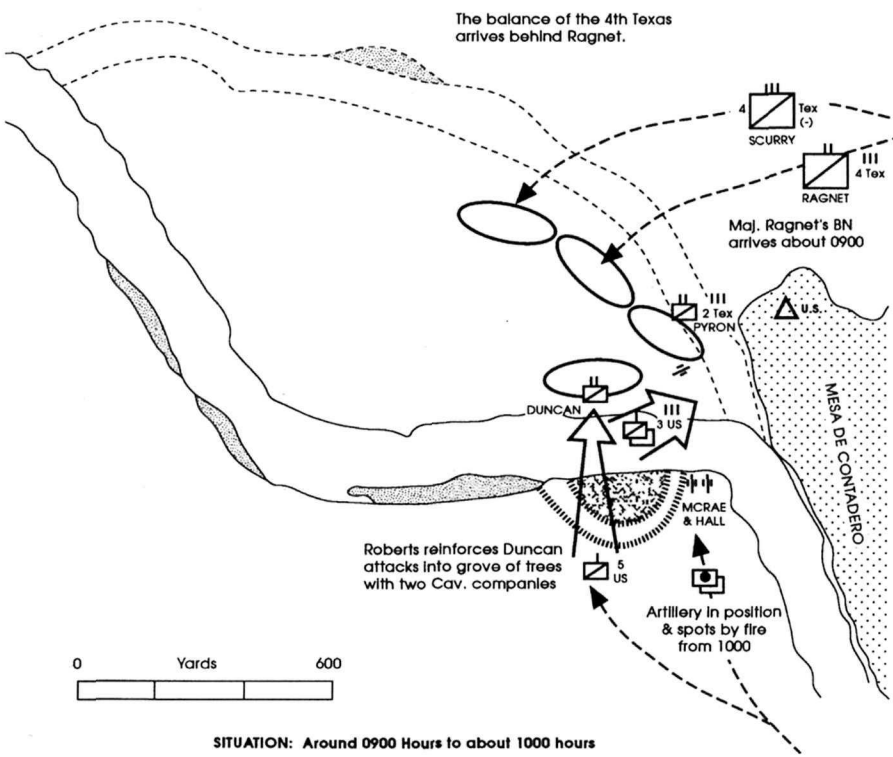


Figure 7.6

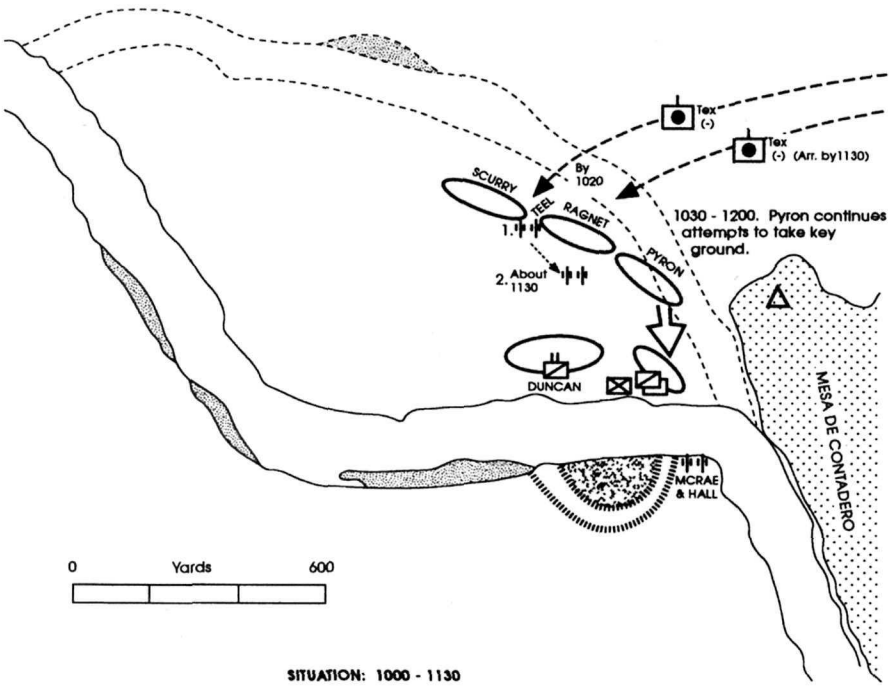


Figure 7.7

the key grove for Duncan (Figures 7.6 and 7.7). By that time there were too many Confederates on the field to execute Roberts's original plan. In later reports, Roberts castigated Duncan for disobeying orders and losing an opportunity to win the battle. In reality, Roberts never made his intentions clear to his subordinates. He should have moved forward earlier in the action; messengers are never as reliable as direct communication in the "fog of war." Even if he had moved earlier, however, it is doubtful that he had enough combat power available at that stage of the battle to make his plan work.

Roberts Tries a New Plan

Meanwhile, forces from both sides flocked to the battlefield (Figure 7.8). By noon the Confederate advanced guard from the Second Texas had been joined by artillery and most of the Fourth and Fifth Texas, and elements from the Seventh Texas would later join them. So precipitous was the Confederate rush to get into action that only a skeleton force was left behind to protect the partly immobilized wagon trains. This allowed some mounted New Mexico militiamen under Robert

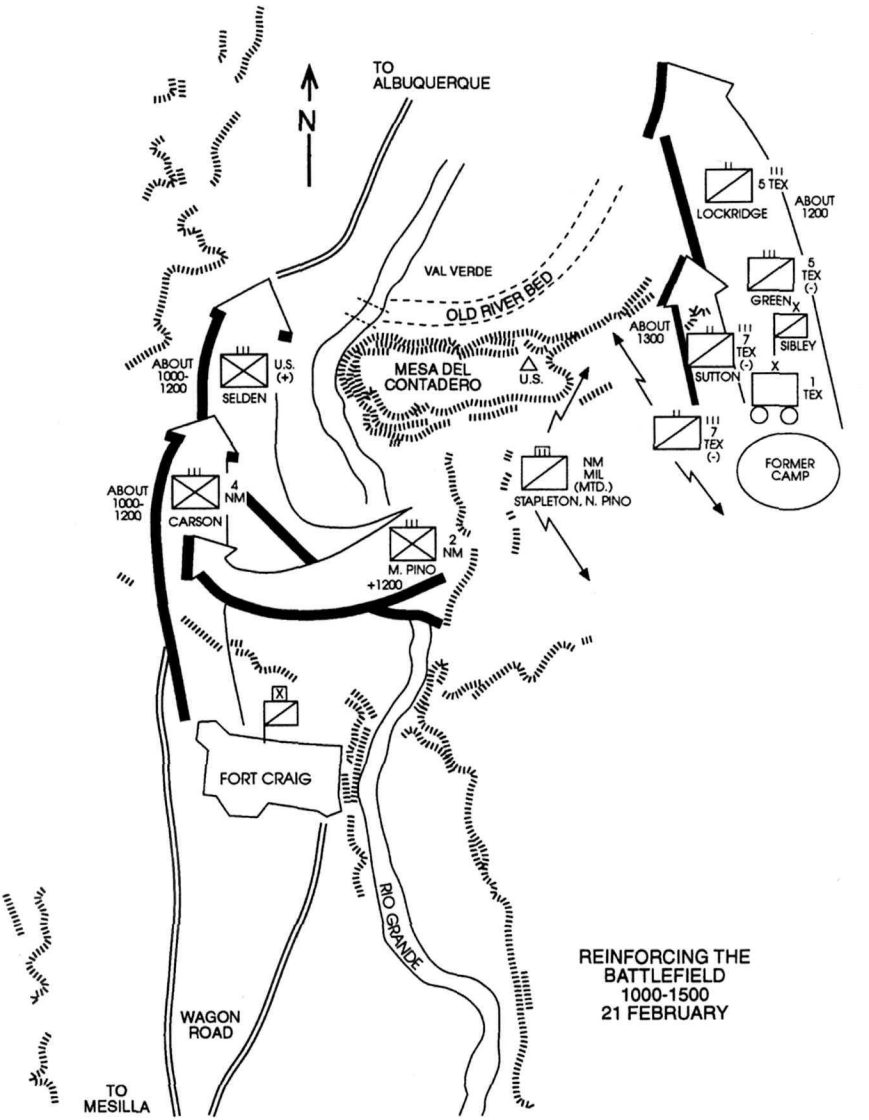

TO ALBUQUERQUE
N
VAL VERDE
OLD RIVER BED
MESA DEL CONTADERO
U.S.
ABOUT 1000-1200
SELDEN
U.S. (+)
ABOUT 1000-1200
CARSON
4 NM
M. PINO +1200
2 NM
NM MIL (MTD.) STAPLETON, N. PINO
5 TEX
LOCKRIDGE
ABOUT 1200
5 TEX (-)
GREEN
SIBLEY
ABOUT 1300
7 TEX (-)
SUTTON
1 TEX
7 TEX (-)
FORMER CAMP
FORT CRAIG
RIO GRANDE
WAGON ROAD
TO MESILLA
REINFORCING THE BATTLEFIELD
1000-1500
21 FEBRUARY

Figure 7.8

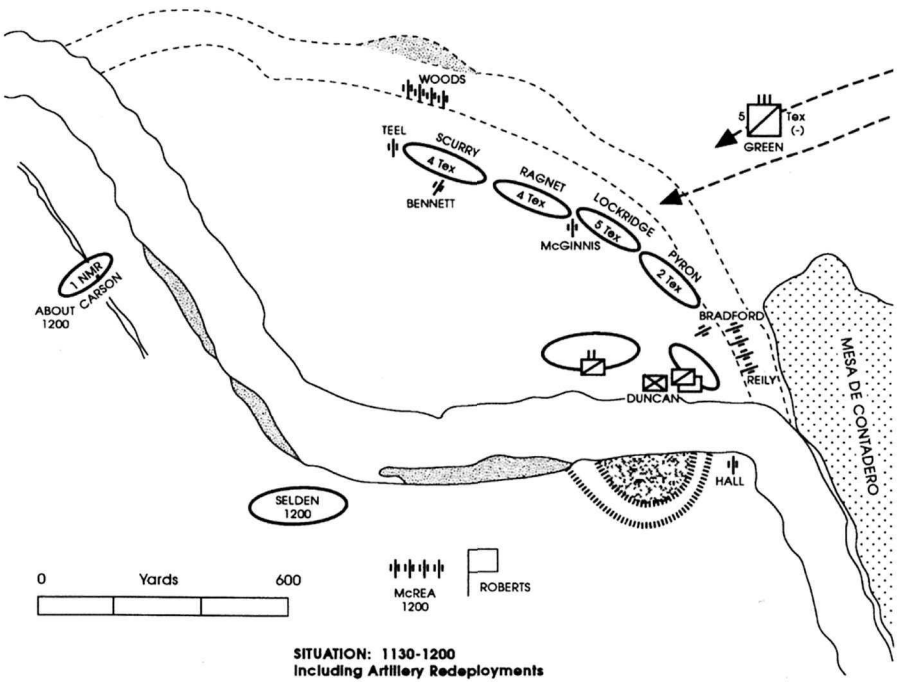


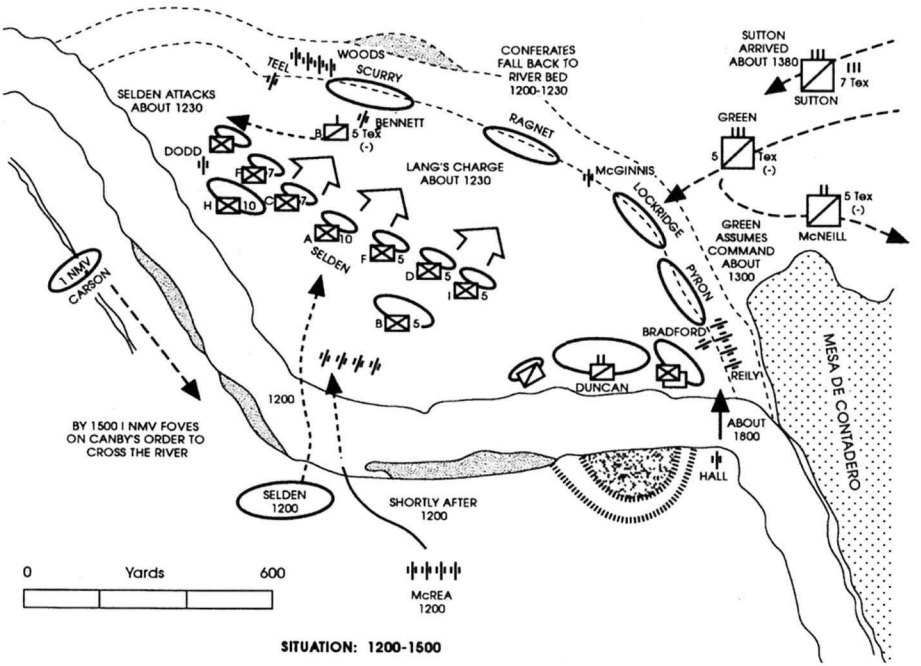
Figure 7.9

Stapleton and Nicolas Pino, deployed across the river by Canby to harass the enemy, to destroy part of the Confederate trains. While the main action went on miles away, these poorly armed and poorly trained militiamen delivered the most telling operational blow of the battle.[27]

By noon, Roberts had also received reinforcements (Figure 7.9). Among the new troops were Colonel Carson and eight infantry companies of his First New Mexico Volunteers. Carson was one of the few experienced Union officers with a mastery of both English and Spanish, a distinct advantage at Valverde. There he would demonstrate rare leadership skills in the handling of volunteers, earning a brevet promotion to brigadier general. Upon his arrival at the battlefield, Carson asked Roberts not to send his volunteers directly into combat, but instead to deploy them into a blocking position on the west side of the river along the road at the base of hills there. For the next few hours Carson would shift his unit northward to anchor the Union left and to provide security from Confederate

cavalry reported to have crossed the river to assail that flank, although these reports later turned out to be wrong. This deployment allowed Carson to accustom his men to battle; though they were not under direct fire, they could observe everything that was going on. Carson had witnessed what happened when the Second New Mexico was rushed prematurely into combat, and he was determined not to allow that to happen to his soldiers. As a result of his actions, the First New Mexico would acquit themselves very well when thrust into the thick of the battle later.

Shortly before Carson's arrival, Roberts had been joined by Capt. Henry Selden's infantry, consisting of eight companies of regulars and one of Colorado Volunteers. Divided into two battalions under the command of Capts. Peter Plympton and Benjamin Wingate, and well armed, these units possessed significant combat power. They had waded the cold Rio Grande the day before to attack the Texans and stayed on the east bank overnight to protect Fort Craig.



SITUATION: 1200-1500

Figure 7.10

Canby brought them back across the river and sent them toward Valverde late in the morning. Cold, hungry, and tired, Selden's soldiers made a forced march to the field. Once they had arrived, Roberts formulated another plan to win the battle. Deploying McRae's guns to cover a river crossing north of the ford, Roberts ordered Selden to assault the Confederates "and engage them with the bayonet." Duncan was supposed to support the attack on the right with his dismounted cavalry and a company of infantry, but he evidently thought his force was too small and beleaguered to move. He may also have experienced difficulty maneuvering his New Mexico troops, few of whom could speak English. Again, he failed to respond to messengers, and Selden attacked unsupported (Figure 7.10).

The low water in the river allowed the infantry to cross at a normally unfordable spot. For the third time in twenty-four hours, the hardy infantry waded the cold waters of the river, rewetting clothing that could not yet have dried. They

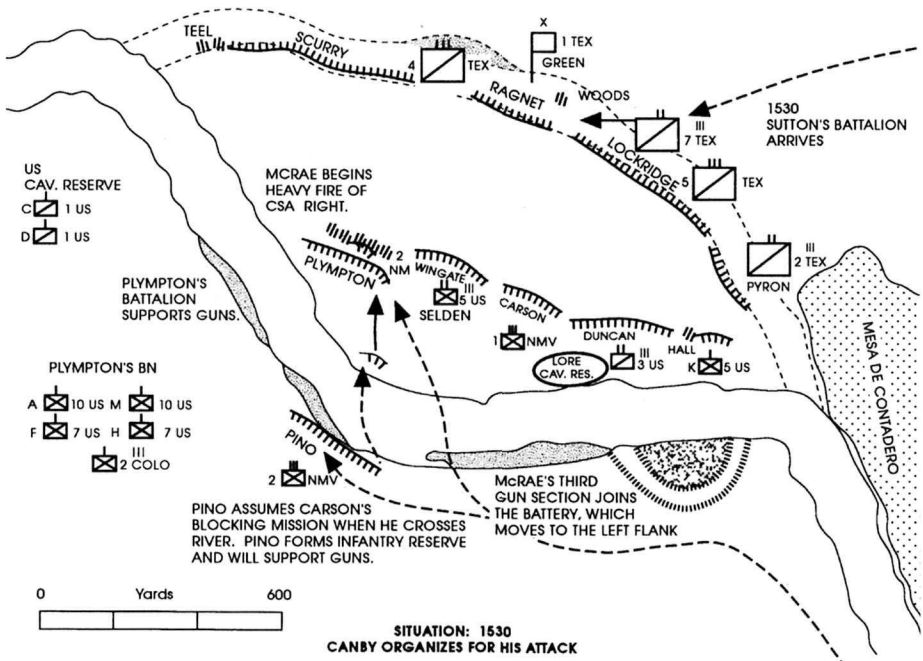


Figure 7.11

deployed in line and pushed steadily forward, achieving a superiority of fire with their more modern weapons. The Confederates withdrew from sand ridge to sand ridge, until by one o'clock, they had been forced into their last possible line of defense in the old riverbed, leaving behind three disabled guns. The steady musket fire from the relentless Union assault was gradually causing more and more casualties, especially among horses gathered to the rear of the position. It seemed that nothing could prevent Selden from sweeping the Texans off the battlefield.

At about this time Capt. Willis Lang's Company B, Fifth Texas, moved out on the Confederate right to attack the Union left. Green had planned to attack with several companies but had countermanded the order before it was executed.[28] Lang's soldiers, armed only with lances and pistols, did not get those instructions, however, and they conducted a mounted charge into a mass of infantry carefully instructed in fighting cavalry.

Lang rode for the left of the Union line where the soldiers were not wearing regular uniforms. These men were not New Mexico militia as Lang expected, however. They were miners from Colorado, steady "Pikes Peakers" who fired two volleys, attacked with bayonets, and "cleaned out the lancers." Of the forty-two horses and men in Lang's command, all the mounts and half the soldiers were casualties. His unit was finished and his assault a failure.[29]

Or so it seemed at the time. In reality, Lang's sacrifice stopped Selden's advance. The Union line lost its momentum and became desynchronized as it received the charge. Then the short-range weapons of the Confederates began to take a toll on Selden's men who were out in the open, and the Union force withdrew behind the sand ridge closest to the old riverbed. Roberts brought his artillery across the river to shell the Texans and to maintain pressure on them once his infantry assault had been stopped. When he received word that Canby was en route to Valverde with reinforcements, Roberts decided to await his arrival and let his troops "fatigued with five hours' constant action," eat lunch and fill their cartridge boxes. The Union infantry had in effect reached and passed what Clausewitz called a "culminating point," the moment when their offensive strength no longer significantly exceeded that of the defenders. While the pause would help to rejuvenate them somewhat, the regular infantry would not reach their initial high level of effectiveness again during the battle.

Canby and Green Mount Attacks

When Canby arrived with the rest of McRae's battery at about 2:45 P.M., he consulted his commanders and conducted a personal battlefield reconnaissance. He found the Union in an advantageous position. Hall's remaining gun (the other 24–pounder having broken its trail) and Duncan's cavalry had finally fully secured the woods on the right, and the hungry and thirsty

Confederates had been completely pushed back into the old river bed. While the Texan position was strong against a frontal assault, a flank attack could enfilade the whole line and sweep the Confederates out. Canby accordingly decided to attack the Texan left (Figure 7.11).

Canby anchored his flanks with artillery, placing McRae on the left and Hall on the right. He then placed Hubbell's and Mortimore's New Mexico Volunteer companies behind McRae in support, and Plympton's battalion and the Coloradans behind the New Mexicans, probably to stiffen the fresher New Mexico troops as well as to provide more support for the artillery. The other company of Hubbell's Fifth New Mexico Volunteer Regiment had deserted en masse before the battle, and this may have influenced Canby's deployment.[30] The center of the Union line included Wingate's battalion of regulars and Carson's First New Mexico, which Canby had ordered across the river. Canby filled the blocking position formerly occupied by Carson's troops with Col. Miguel Pino's Second New Mexico, just arriving after escorting the Union ammunition train on its journey from Fort Craig. Pino also had a mission to cross the river to furnish additional support for McRae's guns. Duncan's five companies of dismounted regular cavalry and one company of regular infantry were on the right, along with four companies of volunteers and Hall's battery. To exploit the success of the planned Union attack, Canby positioned Capt. R. S. C. Lord and two companies of the First Cavalry behind Duncan as a reserve. Canby planned to attack with his right and center, using McRae's battery as a pivot, with the aim of turning the Texan left. Canby knew he had to act quickly. The weather was worsening—snow began to fall about noon—and darkness was rapidly approaching a battlefield already gloomy from the overcast sky and clouds of blackpowder smoke.

The Confederates were not blind to Canby's preparations. They were now commanded by Green, Sibley having relinquished command complaining of illness and exhaustion. He may have been feeling the effects of too much whiskey. Whatever the reason for the change of command, it worked much to the Confederates' benefit. Green was a gifted and intuitive tactician, prone to decisive action. He made a quick decision that the only way to counter the impending Union attack would be by mounting one himself first, and he moved promptly to execute it.

Green now had the whole Confederate Army of New Mexico on the field, except for some small and inadequate security detachments with the trains. His last reinforcements, a battalion of the Seventh Texas, arrived about half past three and moved into position. Green passed the word all along the line to prepare for an attack. Realizing the importance of the Union artillery, he planned to launch assaults on both flanks aimed at Hall and McRae. His troops used the high riverbank to conceal their movements; Maj. Henry Ragnet[31] and his battalion of four

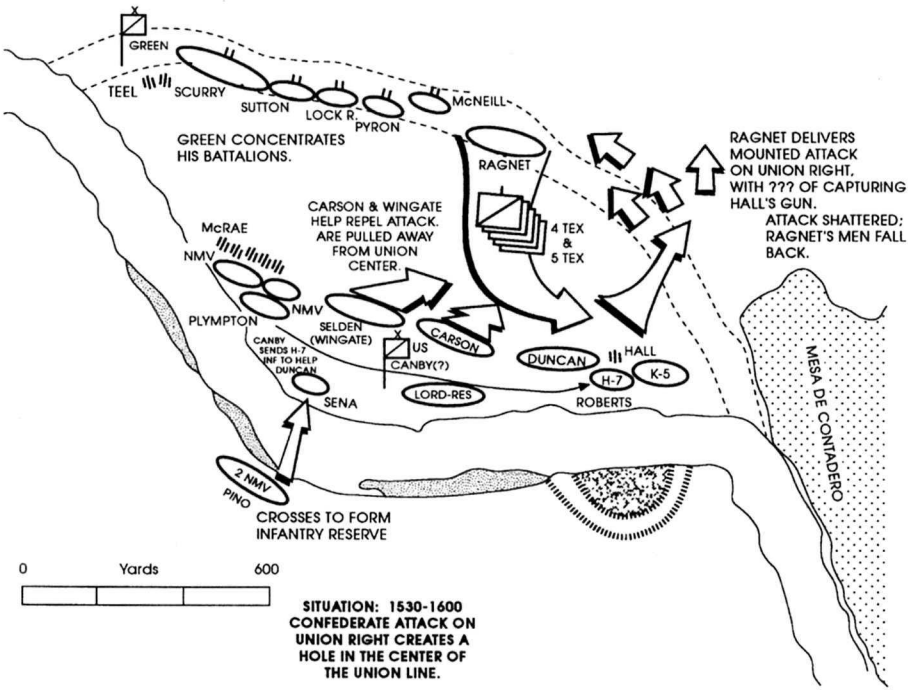


Figure 7.12

companies of the Fourth Texas and one of the Fifth moved to the left, while the rest of the force, including the artillery, assembled on the right.

Ragnet formed his 250 mounted men into a single rank and, upon receiving the signal to attack, rode over the embankment and down on Duncan's position (Figure 7.12). The Union attack had just started, and Ragnet's men got within 100 yards of their goal before the Union opened what Roberts called a "destructive fire." This altered the direction of Ragnet's charge, perhaps because the Texan's horses were unused to fire and shied away from it. The effect was that Ragnet's men rode diagonally across the Union front, allowing volleys from Carson, Wingate, Duncan, and Hall to shatter the assault and scatter the charging battalion. Carson's men held very steady during the exchange. While it was not a difficult fight for them, their commander's precautions in preparing them for combat had worked to perfection, and the First New Mexico would perform well during the rest of the day.

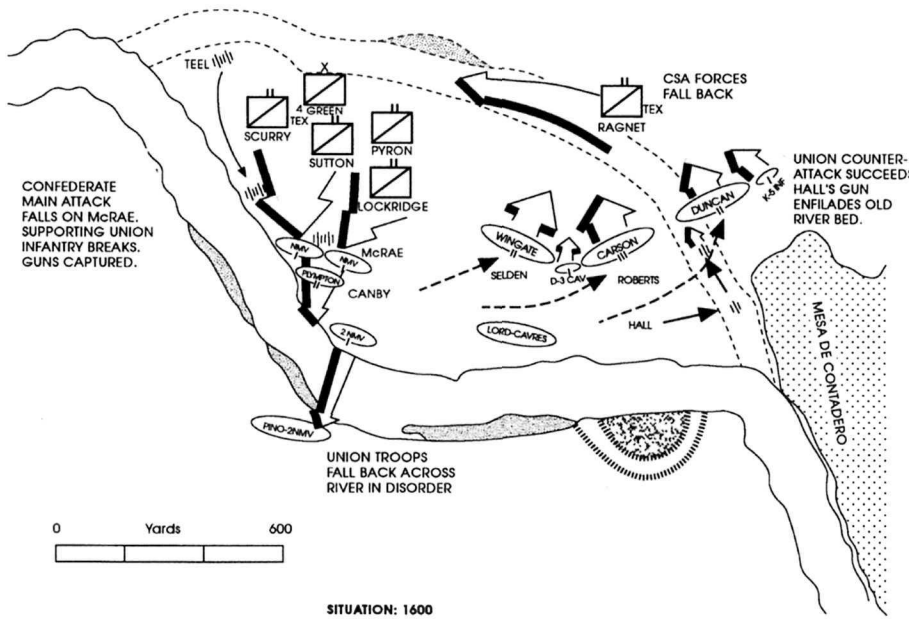


Figure 7.13

Wingate's regulars and Carson's volunteers exploited their success, following the retreating Confederate cavalry toward the old riverbed and away from the center of the line. Duncan's cavalry also advanced, as did Hall's gun, which was in the riverbed along with pursuing riflemen. The Union attack was achieving its objective almost effortlessly, helped by the fortuitous timing of Ragnet's futile charge. Union victory seemed imminent.

At that moment, however, Green launched the attack on his right, aimed at McRae's guns (Figure 7.13). Men from the Second, Fourth, Fifth, and Seventh Texas, supported by Capt. Trevanian Teel's artillery, yelled "Up boys, and at them!" and swarmed over the riverbank. Probably about 750 to 1,000 men made the charge. Canby, viewing the battle from his horse in the center of the line, noticed the attack before Plympton's infantry, who were lying down near the river. The Union commander saw the dangerous gap in his line caused by the pursuit of Ragnet and dashed over to organize a defense of the guns.

He was too late. Teel estimated that the whole Confederate charge took only eight minutes, so Canby had very little time to react. While the officers and men of McRae's battery courageously manned their guns, their support failed them.

Hubbell and Mortimore were the first to face the charge. At some point, probably after taking a few volleys from the attacking Texas, some portion of the inexperienced volunteers withdrew in disorder. Mortimore was wounded three times and cited in dispatches, but at least some of his troops failed him. Fleeing volunteers streamed through Plympton's tired battalion and "communicated their panic." Plympton seems to have been able to rally only his own company, F Company Seventh Infantry, and the Coloradans. Canby dismounted and tried to regroup the troops as well. Even McRae came back to the infantry and "implored them for God's sake to assist him in maintaining his position and to save his guns." But it was all to no avail. McRae returned to die bravely at his post, at the same gun where Maj. Sam Lockridge, the leader of the Confederate attack, was killed.[32]

The argument has been made that the heavy casualties suffered by the supporting volunteers demonstrate that they must have fought bravely. It is true that in most Civil War battles, units that ran away suffered relatively few killed and wounded. The major exception to this rule is when the movements of panicked units were constrained by the presence of other soldiers or by the terrain, as happened in opening battles for other volunteers. Col. William Tecumseh Sherman's brigade of volunteers suffered the heaviest Union casualties at First Bull Run, but their turning into a "confused mass of men" under fire prompted Sherman to write, "Our men are not good soldiers. They brag, but don't perform, complain sadly if they don't get everything they want, and a march of a few miles uses them up." At Shiloh the Fifty-fifth Illinois fled into a narrow ravine, and the Confederates slaughtered them. A survivor wrote, "It was like shooting into a flock of sheep," and a Mississippi major who took part reflected, "I never saw such cruel work during the war."[33]

At Valverde, observers expressed similar sentiments as Union soldiers, volunteers and some regulars, were shot wallowing through willow thickets or trying to cross the Rio Grande. Pino's Second New Mexico was seemingly fresh enough and in the right position to restore the situation, but that unit was evidently still not recovered from its poor performance of the prior day. Pino could get only one of his companies across the river, and his reluctant men contributed to the general melee and confusion. Green noted that "many were killed in the river," and a Texan soldier wrote that when he and his comrades saw the Union soldiers crowded in the Rio Grande, "We rushed up to the bank and poured a deadly fire upon them." He added, "The mortality amongst them in the river was terrible. The shot guns then came into play and did great execution."[34] Canby's fear that his volunteers could not effectively maneuver under fire proved correct for Pino's troops, and perhaps Canby should have known better than to expect more from them. Yet all of the First and the mounted elements of the Third New Mexico

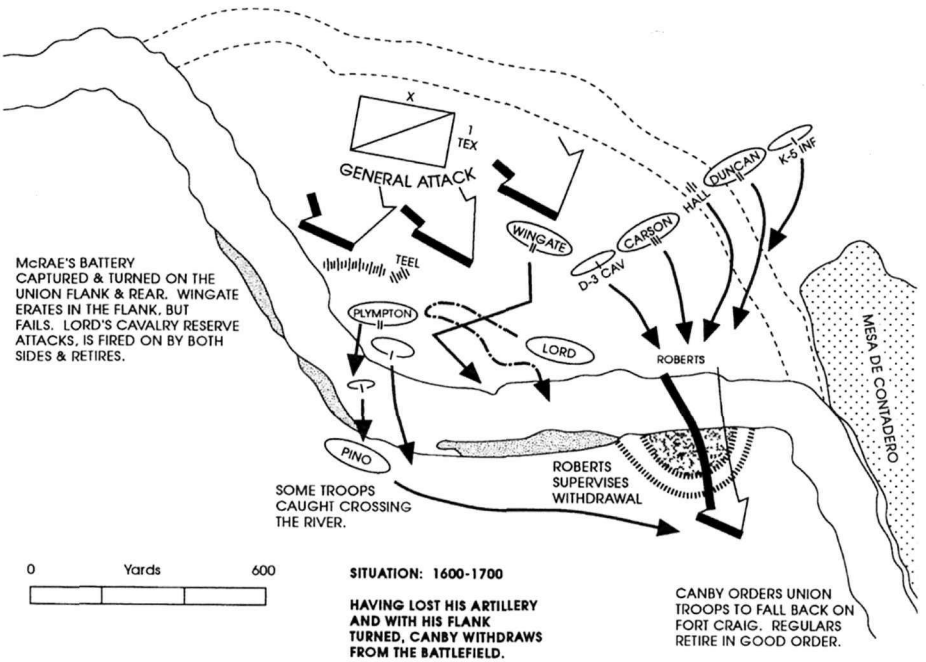


Figure 7.14

generally performed well, and any critique of the performance of the New Mexicans at Valverde that ignores their contributions is incomplete and unfair.

Canby tried to restore his flank with his reserve troops, but Lord's counterattack was a debacle. His men rode into the midst of the confusion between attacking Confederates and withdrawing Union troops and came under fire from both sides. Lord withdrew his squadron, claiming later that his unit was out of provisions, his horses were broken down, and he was caught between two superior enemy forces. Wingate was more successful, as he managed to turn his battalion, bring it up at the double quick, and open fire on the Confederates milling around McRae's guns. The Confederates momentarily fell back from Wingate's assault, but when he was seriously wounded his men seemed to lose heart and momentum.[35]

Canby, in the midst of the disaster on his left, ordered a withdrawal back to the fort (Figure 7.14). The successful Union troops on the right who were sweeping the riverbed were surprised and disappointed by the order to fall back.

Canby may have been leading so far forward that he lost perspective on the whole battle, but it is more likely that he simply was unwilling to take any more risks that might endanger Fort Craig. Whatever his reasons, he pulled his soldiers off the battlefield and left it in the possession of Green's men. The Confederates were too tired, hungry, and disorganized to mount an effective pursuit.

Results and Conclusions

Thanks to Green's skill and leadership, the Confederates had won a tactical victory. Yet they had not achieved their main goal, the capture of Fort Craig. Intimidated by "Quaker guns" (dummy guns, named in reference to the Quakers' opposition to war) mounted on the imposing revetments around the fort, and short of supplies, the lightly armed Confederates could not besiege their objective and had to move on.[36] So at the operational level of war, Canby was the winner, despite the fact that he had not achieved his tactical objective of keeping his enemy away from the river or holding the ford. Not only did he maintain the fort, he also decreased Sibley's ability to sustain a successful campaign. The Confederate logistic situation was far worse after the battle. Some of their sparse trains had been destroyed by New Mexico militia, and only five days' rations were left. Owning to the losses of horses in the battle and to the need to use some of the remaining animals to pull the captured guns of McRae's battery, the Fourth Texas became infantry. Not only did this hurt that unit's morale,[37] it deprived Sibley's force of the mobility that was perhaps its greatest asset.

Though one must be cautious in applying lessons from the past in current situations, there is much to be gained for a student of the military art in the study of this battle.[38] It illustrates the importance of linking tactical and operational goals, having viable logistics, gathering effective intelligence, applying superior technology, and planning and synchronizing operations. The undeveloped nature of the area around modern day Fort Craig provides a rare opportunity to study undisturbed terrain and consider its role in shaping the battle.

The most important lessons of Valverde, however, concern the role of men and leaders in battle. Civil War officers led from the front, and many regulars and Texans died leading their men into battle. Brave leaders who survived received the increased respect of their men; those who appeared cowardly, such as Sibley, were harshly criticized. And with inspired leadership, small numbers of aggressive, determined soldiers could have significant impact on the larger battle. It appears that only about 200 men, essentially a reinforced infantry company, carried the day for the Confederates. The remainder of the attacking troops, while present, were not involved in the final assault that captured McRae's battery. Instead they simply followed their more aggressive comrades. A few good men can make a big difference.[39]

Yet, in the final analysis, faulty Confederate operational planning negated their tactical success. They had to march on, leaving Canby in their rear, to repeat their experience at Glorieta. If Sibley had had better logistics, or if his troops had been armed with heavier weapons, or his intelligence had been better, perhaps the outcome of his campaign would have been different. But Sibley was not so lucky, and the Battle of Valverde helped to hasten the demise of his hopes to conquer the Southwest. When Canby wrote of his soldiers in his after-action report, "All feel that greater injuries have been inflicted upon the enemy than we have sustained ourselves," he was more correct than he probably knew.

Valverde demonstrated that a local defeat, be it Lang's or Ragnet's charges or even Canby's retreat from the battlefield, can sometimes contribute to overall victory. And a victory on the battlefield, despite the courage and dash of the soldiers who gain it, can be negated by poor planning and preparation by their leaders. Perhaps the best epilogue for Sibley was written by a soldier in the U.S. Fifth Infantry:

> Moreover the campaign was noticeable from the fact, believed to be unparalleled in military history, in that whilst the winning Army was tactically defeated in every engagement of importance, its enemy was finally driven from the invaded territory utterly defeated, disheartened, and decimated.[40] •

Notes

1. John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 158.
2. Most of the after-action reports used to study this battle have been collected in *Confederate Victories in the Southwest: Prelude to Defeat* (Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace, 1961). References to primary documents are from that source unless otherwise cited.
3. For an analysis of these shortcomings in Vietnam see Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, 1982).
4. All figures redrafted from Charles Kirkpatrick and Conrad Crane, *The Prudent Soldier, The Rash Old Fighter, and the Walking Whiskey Keg* (Fort Bliss: US Army Air Defense Artillery School, 1987).
5. On resistance to appointment of Americans see Canby to G. R. Paul, 15 Januay 1862; on junior officer appointments see Canby to I. Lynde, 7 July 1861.
6. For an example of racism, see Nolie Mumey, ed., *Bloody Trails along the Rio Grande: A Day-by-day Diary of Alonzo Ferdinand Ickis* (Denver: Old West, 1858), p. 73.
7. Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, ed., *Legacy of Honor. The Life of Rafael Chacon, A Nineteenth-Century New Mexican* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), pp. 138–143, 267–281; W. J. L. Nicodemus to Col. M. E. Pino, 17 January 1862.
8. Max L. Heyman Jr., *Prudent Soldier. A Biography of Major General E. R. S. Canby* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, 1959), p. 146; Chris Emmett, *Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), pp. 239–242; Meketa, Legacy *of Honor,* p. 135.
9. For some examples of problems with New Mexican junior leadership, see Meketa, *Legacy of Honor,* pp. 125, 135.
10. Canby to Adjutant General, 8 December 1861; Maj. J. L. Donaldson to Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, 1 March 1862; W. R. Shoemaker to Canby, with endorsements from Carson and St. Vrain, 15 August 1861.
11. Kirkpatrick and Crane, *Prudent Soldier, Rash Fighter,* pp. 7, 16, 21–28. This Air Defense School text on the Battle of Valverde needs some revision, but it is generally an excellent source on the technology, the leaders, and the battle. McRae's six gun battery included three 12-pounder Napoleons. Hall had two 24-pounders.
12. On Confederate logistical shortcomings as the campaign began see Theophilus Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi. Being a History of the Old Sibley Brigade* (Houston: Stagecoach Press, 1961), pp. 12–15.
13. H. R. Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846–1912* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 114; Martin H. Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign* (Austin: Universiy of Texas Press, 1960), p. 120.
14. Report of Lt. John Pulliam, C.S.A., 15 August–8 September 1861; Report of Lt. Col. J. R. Baylor to Gen. Earl Van Dorn, 15 August 1861; Don E. Alberts, ed., *Rebels on the Rio Grande. The Civil War Journals of A. B. Peticolas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 29–31.
15. Mumey, *Bloody Trails,* P. 74.
16. For good discussions on this skirmishing and Sibley's problems see Hall, *Sibley's Campaign,* pp. 78–80 and Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* pp. 35–37.

17. Maj. T. T. Teel, C.S.A., "Sibley's New Mexico Campaign—Its Objects and the Causes of Its Failure," in *Battle and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1956), 2:700.
18. Report, Canby to the Adjutant General, 1 March 1862. These after-action reports are also in *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), 130 volumes.
19. Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* pp. 37–38; Report, H. H. Sibley to General S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector General. Either Green failed to consider that this maneuver also put Canby across Confederate lines of communication, or he felt this was a risk he had to take.
20. Hall, *Sibley's Campaign,* p. 80, Report, Canby to Adjutant General; James L. Collins, Territorial Indian Agent, to William P. Dole, 1 March 1862, Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, Microcopy 234, Roll 551.
21. Capt. George H. Pettis, "The Confederate Invasion of New Mexico and Arizona," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War,* 2:103–106; James L. Collins, Territorial Indian Agent, to William P. Dole, 1 March 1862, Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, Microcopy 234, Roll 551. Some historians question whether Graydon's raid really occurred, but such action was in keeping with his character.
22. Unless otherwise noted, this account of the battle is based on the collected after-action reports from *Confederate Victories in the Southwest* and on the observations of many students and officers from the US Army Air Defense Artillery Center and School at Fort Bliss, Texas.
23. Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* p. 51.
24. Mumey, *Bloody Trails,* p. 71.
25. "Rash old fighter" from Brig. Gen. Latham Anderson "Canby's Service in the New Mexico Campaign," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War,* 2:697–698.
26. See for example Altred H. Guerney and Henry M. Alden, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War* (Fairfax Press reprint of 1866 Harper and Brothers edition), p. 289; James L. Collins, Territorial Indian Agent, to William P. Dole, 1 March 1862, Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, Microcopy 234, Roll 551.
27. On the action burning the trains, see Meketa, *Legacy of Honor,* p. 379, n. 14.
28. Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* pp. 53–54.
29. Hall, *Sibley's Campaign,* pp. 262–265; Mumey, *Bloody Trails,* pp. 29–36. Ickis was in the unit that received the charge, and he wrote, "it was fun to see the Texans fall."
30. Meketa, *Legacy of Honor,* pp. 125, 374, n. 4. The company commander, Capt. Saturnino Barrientos, was later found guilty of desertion by a court-martial. His men were exonerated because they had just been following his orders.
31. This name is sometimes spelled "Raguet" in accounts of the battle. Whatever the spelling, the French name is pronounced like "Rag-nay."
32. Report, Capt. Peter Plympton to Capt. Henry Selden, 24 Februay 1862, Record Group 393, "US Army Continental Commands 1821–1920," pt. 1, entry 3183, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Mumey, *Bloody Trails,* pp. 32, 77; Alberts, *Rebels on the RioGrande,* p. 48; James L. Collins, Territorial Indian Agent, to William P. Dole, 1 March 1862, Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, Microcopy 234, Roll 551.

33. William C. Davis, *Battle at Bull Run* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), pp. 218–219, 253; Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), p. 232.
34. Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* pp. 48, 50–51.
35. Hall, *Sibley's Campaign,* p. 98. Hall does not express as much optimism about Wingate's chances of restoring the situation as Canby does, but both agree that Wingate's wound stopped his counterattack. Wingate later died of his injuries.
36. Hall, *Sibley's Campaign,* p. 106. Some Texans had been inside Fort Craig before the war and advised Sibley that it was too strong to assault.
37. Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande,* p. 55.
38. An important extra benefit for students is learning to evaluate sources. One must be cautious with the Valverde material; after-action reports aim to justify actions and often conflict, diarists write much hearsay, and memoirs like Chacon's were written long after the battle.
39. It is interesting to speculate about what might have resulted had Green left 200 extra men guarding his trains. He might have saved the supplies, but not had the force available on the battlefield to take McRae's guns.
40. Alwyn Barr, ed., *Charles Porter's Account of the Confederate Attempt to Seize Arizona and New Mexico* (Austin: Pemberton Press, 1964), p.22.



Figure 8.1 Captain Santiago Hubbell, whose men were accused of fleeing in panic from the Texas charge on McRae's battery at the Battle of Valverde. In reality, Hubbell's company suffered a casualty rate of 51 percent, second highest on the battlefield for that day.
(Hubbell Collection, State Records Center & Archives #12306)

CHAPTER 8

Charles and Jacqueline Meketa

The New Mexico Volunteers

A NEW LOOK AT THE BATTLE OF VALVERDE



In 1911, an aged Civil War veteran wrote, "We must speak on behalf of truth to correct all erroneous impressions given out about the Battle of Valverde. That was a bloody battle, not yet sufficiently understood and not yet sufficiently appreciated."[1] *Prophetic words!*

Misconceptions and errors regarding the role played by New Mexico's Hispanic soldiers at that battle have survived for more than a century, reflecting poorly on the pride and reputation of a whole segment of the population. It is time for some new and critical evaluations of that event.

Col. Edward R. S. Canby, commander of the Union forces that were defeated on February 21, 1862, laid the blame for the loss on the shoulders of the New Mexicans who made up the bulk of the volunteer and militia troops. In his official report Colonel Canby wrote:

> The battle was fought almost entirely by the regular troops (trebled in number by the Confederates), with no assistance from the militia, and but little from the volunteers, who would not obey orders, or obeyed them too late to be of any service. 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 of the army. . . . Large numbers of the militia and volunteers have deserted, but this adds to rather than diminishes our strength.[2]

Almost all of these assertions can be challenged when the records are researched. Canby's allegations slant the true picture to a considerable degree. For example, he failed to mention that mounted volunteer companies were the first Union troops to cross the Rio Grande and engage the enemy at sunup and that five of their companies fought throughout the day with courage and valor.[3] He also failed to report that a number of other volunteer and militia units carried out their orders exactly.

The pivotal point at which the Battle of Valverde was lost was the capture of Capt. Alexander McRae's battery of cannons by Texan forces. Colonel Canby claimed that the volunteer troops among the battery's defenders broke rank and ran in the face of the Confederate charge. He also complained that he could not get the support he needed from Col. Miguel Pino's command of infantry volunteers and other Union troops to successfully counterattack, and that this necessitated his order for a retreat from the battlefield.

Not everyone involved in the fighting that day agreed with Canby's assessment, however, and their opinions may well have merit. More than one of the Federal soldiers later said that he felt the order to retreat had been premature and that the battle had been lost at command level.

At the time they made their desperate charge, Confederate sources admit that their men and horses were completely worn out and in a position where it was expected that "raking fire would slay the last man of us."[4] Even though the Rebels were successful in capturing McRae's guns, they were further weakened by casualties they sustained in the assault and might not have been able to withstand, for long, a Union counterattack if one had been mounted by a calm, aggressive, and effective commander.[5]

Canby, however, effectively placed the onus of the defeat on the New Mexico volunteers and militiamen. Over the years, perhaps because of his rank or because of the assumption by some that the incorporation of his reports into official records gave them a sort of immutable veracity, Canby's words have been unquestioningly used as the basis for most descriptions of events at Valverde that day. The accounts of the few dissenters have been largely overlooked, until recently.[6]

One early historian who did give voice to the opposition, however, was Agustus A. Hayes, Jr., who observed in 1880 that "one cannot write the history of this remarkable campaign without mentioning the strong opinion of some of Carson's fiery fighters, and even at least one officer of distinction and experience, that victory was within their grasp at Valverde and lost by mismanagement."[7] Capt. Rafael Chacon commanded a company of mounted volunteers that was part of Col. Christopher (Kit) Carson's infantry regiment on the right of the Union line. They successfully drove back a rebel attack on Lt. Robert Hall's battery just prior to the attack on McRae's cannons. Chacon's analysis of the final moments of the battle differed from Canby's.

> 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. I was so loath to leave the field that my company was the last of our army to retreat and cross the river. . . . Colonel Carson's regiment fought bravely on that portion of the field assigned to them, and they 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.[8]

Another who disagreed was John W. Ellis, who served as a sergeant in Company K, Fifth U.S. Infantry, during the battle. In a May 1892 letter, he recounted details of the fighting and supported the position that the Union troops were thwarted by poor decisions made at the highest level of command. Although obviously biased and not totally accurate in every aspect, his letter reveals some interesting points.

> At 7 o'clock in the morning the Battle of Valverde was fought, and well and valiantly fought, while Col. Roberts of the Third U. S. Cavalry was in command. . . . When he (Canby) did come his first act was to move our batteries from their secure position to one where they could more easily be captured by the enemy—above a deep and heavy ravine, where Major Lockridge of the Texas forces came up under the guns and captured them. Here is where Ben Wingate and Col. Selden with 5 companies of the 5th made repeated charges to retake it, though Canby had three or four times sent his aide-de-camp to tell him to retreat. But he returned answer that he would never retreat until he again took those guns. Finally, a cannon-ball striking him on a leg and shattering it, retreat was ordered and poor Ben was carried across the river in a blanket and taken to the fort. Canby, that same evening, went to see him. . . . He had no sooner entered the door than poor old Ben tried to raise himself up, but he was unable at all, and his last words were, "Leave me. You are a traitor. Could I but live to get to Washington!" Thus died as brave and true a soldier as ever wore the blue, respected and beloved by his men and his superiors.[9]

Alonzo Ickis, a Colorado volunteer, also complained that after Canby assumed command, affairs on the battlefield worsened, and that the fight was lost by bad management. He asserted that "the padre told Col. Canby he was a traitor. Canby had him placed under guard for two hours and then released."[10]

The account of William W. Mills, who was assigned as an acting second lieutenant on Col. Benjamin S. Roberts's staff the day of the battle, also supports the position that Colonel Canby, rather than the indicted New Mexicans, was

responsible for the outcome of the Battle of Valverde. He described events, beginning at 2:00 P.M., as follows:

> The New Mexican volunteers were keeping the enemy from the water and skirmishing briskly at times. . . . So far all was favorable for us except the repulse of Selden. We had kept them from the water, McRae had beaten their battery, and the Coloradoans 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 desperately. . . . At three o'clock that afternoon General Canby appeared on the field. . . . After a brief consultation with Roberts he advanced our battery about five hundred yards, withdrew Selden from its support, leaving only two companies to protect it, and opened fire. Carson's Mexican regiment had been moved to our right and advanced, and with one company of Regulars repulsed a charge of Texas cavalry with some loss. . . . I admired General Canby alike for his 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.[11]

Thus it would seem that there were many disgruntled soldiers and officers among the Union troops after the battle. They faulted Colonel Canby both for his repositioning of troops after his arrival on the battlefield and also for his premature order to retreat.

Unfortunately, it is easy to find relatively current accounts by historians, even those of national repute, who do not fault Canby's command decisions or the actions of the regulars. Instead, they repeat the tired, old allegations that the New Mexicans refused to fight.

It would seem that Canby's degree of responsibility for the final fiasco needs to be illuminated and the record reexamined. After all, his decision to reposition McRae's battery to a more vulnerable site and then withdraw some of its support to bolster Hall's cannons on the right was a tactical error. The Confederate charge against Hall was a feint made by a 250-man diversionary force, and once this feint had successfully drawn the Union defenders away, a Rebel contingent of at least 750 soldiers overran the ill-fated McRae's position.

In addition to indicating the degree of Canby's responsibility for the outcome of the battle, an impartial examination of all the facts may partly or wholly exonerate those groups of New Mexico volunteers whom Canby specifically cited as responsible for the Union loss. First, there is the matter of the defense of McRae's battery. Two volunteer companies that formed part of its support, those

of Capts. Santiago Hubbell and William Mortimore, have long been castigated for their actions in the battery's defense. Capt. P. W. L. Plympton, a regular army officer, in explaining why his battalion had failed to save the guns from the Rebel charge, reported that at the moment of the attack, "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."[12] This accusation was subsequently repeated by Canby in his official report to Washington, resulting in the widespread belief that the men of the two volunteer companies ran, thus losing both the battery and the battle.[13]

For many, Canby's report supplied an easy, pat explanation and named the culprits among the battery's defenders. No one asked obvious questions, such as why volunteer troops, long disparaged by Anglo professional soldiers, would be placed in a strategically significant position by Plympton or his superiors. Also unasked was what sort of casualty rates those two companies suffered during the action and who else, on either side, reported that the first line of defenders broke ranks and ran.

Many contemporary accounts of the charge upon McRae's battery fail to mention its defenders panicking and deserting their position in the face of the enemy. Union Colonel Roberts reported that McRae's position was held "with unexampled determination" until captured, and New Mexico Governor Henry Connelly spoke of the great losses inflicted upon the charging Rebels by the battery's protectors. Confederate Lt. Col. W. R. Scurry told of his men making an attack into "a driving storm of grape and canister and musket balls sent hurling around (them)," and another southern officer, Col. Thomas Green, described how his troops made "a most desperate charge and in hand-to-hand conflict completely overwhelmed them, killing most of their gunners and driving the infantry into the river."[14]

When all the nineteenth-century sources describing the Battle of Valverde are examined in great detail it becomes apparent that not a single one can be relied upon as totally accurate. Much of what has been written is based on rumor, hearsay, error, and outright bombast. It is difficult to trust and utilize some facts from the accounts of Connelly, Canby, Mills, Hollister, Peticolas, Ickis, and others, when obvious errors or exaggerations are incorporated next to true statements.[15] It seems, therefore, that the most appropriate and accurate way to establish the truth would be to assemble hard evidence, such as statistics, topographic maps, and other firm facts, and to reexamine what has been written about the battle in light of this evidence.

In an attempt to determine whether Hubbell's and Mortimore's companies were indeed culpable, an analysis of their casualty rates was made by the authors and compared with those of other units on the scene. A compilation of the final fatality figures for the Battle of Valverde (which includes not only those who died immediately but also those who perished within days or a month or two as a direct result of wounds received that day) set the total Union fatalities at 100. Of these, eighty were members of the eight units used to support McRae's guns. Not all, but most, were killed in the bloody few minutes during which the battery was charged and captured. In addition, of the 122 Union soldiers listed as wounded (and surviving), 87 were among the men clustered around the guns, as were 48 of the 87 listed as missing.[16]

A breakdown, by company, of the eight units surrounding McRae's battery indicates that Company F of the Seventh U.S. Infantry sustained the most severe losses, by percentage, with nineteen men killed, seventeen wounded, and six missing, out of a complement of sixty-nine.[17]

By the same measure, the long-vilified Hubbell's company of volunteers incurred the second highest losses of *any* Union company at Valverde during the combat. Out of seventy-four fighters, they lost nineteen killed, eleven wounded, and eight missing—hardly statistics that are compatible with flight in the face of the enemy! Surprisingly, McRae's individual command of personnel actually manning the guns, long rumored to have been heroes who "died down to the last man bravely protecting their weapons," suffered proportionally fewer casualties, with eighteen fatalities, fifteen wounded, and eight missing out of approximately eighty-three men.

Mortimore's 'company, the other volunteer unit assigned to protect the battery, lost four killed, four wounded, and an unknown number missing. Exactly how many of the company's men were present that day is uncertain, since some had been sent to guard horses held at a grazing camp some miles away, but the number was probably between forty-five and fifty. These figures would make Mortimore's unit's casualties proportional to those of several of the regular army companies protecting the guns; Mortimore himself was wounded, and one of his sergeants is known to have been captured by the Texans.

The statistics on the defenders of McRae's battery show that the regular army and Colorado troops, including McRae's command (all Anglo-American soldiers) suffered a casualty rate of thirty-three percent killed and wounded, while the New Mexican troops under the command of Hubbell and Mortimore (almost exclusively Hispanos) sustained a thirty-one percent casualty rate. It seems impossible to reconcile the Hubbell company's record with that of a group of cowards who fled the scene of the assault upon the battery. If they were, indeed, the troops Plympton referred to, they were driven back only after taking terrible

casualties. If, instead, some portion of Mortimore's unit or some of the regulars with similar casualty rates were the culprits, then Hubbell's men should not have been singled out for censure. Yet through the years, in account after account, the New Mexicans have been blamed for the Valverde fiasco, while no criticism of any regular army units seems to have made its way into print.

In addition to the New Mexico volunteer companies at McRae's guns, another of Canby's primary scapegoats was Col. Miguel Pino's Second Infantry Regiment, the unit Canby accused of failure to ford the river. As noted above, Canby pinpointed Pino's failure to respond as "the immediate cause of the disaster at Valverde." Pino's official report, however, stated that when the order to cross was received he and his men began to comply. Pino claimed that "while this movement was being executed we were ordered back to form on the western bank where we took our position and fired upon the enemy until ordered to return to Fort Craig."[18] Even Canby admitted that at least one company from Pino's regiment, along with part of another, did manage to cross the river before the general retreat began.

Several years later, an article in a Santa Fe newspaper disputed Canby's criticism of Pino's regiment, saying:

> Again, it was said the Col. Pino's volunteers did not do what was expected of it [sic] at the battle of Valverde when the fact was it did all that it was ordered to do on that day and if it did not participate in the battle it was because it was assigned to other duty in the early part of the day, in watching the enemy opposite Fort Craig, and did not receive orders to march to Valverde until it was too late for it to reach the battlefield before McRae's battery was charged and taken and our forces on the retreat to the fort. . . . The charge upon the battery was not made until some time after Col. Pino was ordered to abandon his position on the opposite side of the river from Fort Craig and proceed to the battlefield. His leaving that position relieved a reserve for the Texans. . . . They too were ordered up to join the battle. Their line of march was nearly direct, whilst that of Col. Pino was circuitous. The former consequently reached the scene of action first and it is supposed that that reserve formed in the main the party which so daringly and successfully charged McRae's battery.[19]

When available accounts, both Union and Confederate, are thoroughly analyzed, common sense mandates the conclusion that Pino's command was innocent of the charge that most of its personnel could not "be induced to cross the river." Confederate records confirm that Texan troops that had been held in position most of the day across from Fort Craig did indeed move northward and take part

in the final and successful charge at Valverde. Pino's men, once they were ordered by Canby to leave their original position on the east side of the river, were required to ford it, march at least seven and one-half miles while escorting a slow-moving ammunition train, and then begin to cross the Rio Grande once again—all time-consuming operations. Even Canby's reports seem contradictory on this point. He seems to verify Pino's version when he writes that the unit "was just coming up" when Hall's battery was attacked and that just as the attack on Hall's battery was being repulsed, "a formidable storming party . . . moved rapidly upon McRae's battery."[20]

Canby's blanket denunciation of the militia as having been of "no assistance" at Valverde was unjustified and patently unfair. He failed to differentiate among several groups of militiamen and failed to credit several that did excellent service away from the actual battle site.

Militia records are scarce, but it is known that one group of organized militia was ordered to garrison Fort Craig on the day of the battle and did so, exactly as told, thereby releasing other troops for participation in the battle. A second group of about 300 mounted fighters of the Second New Mexico Militia, commanded by Col. Nicolas Pino, was ordered to the east side of the Rio Grande, where they encountered some Texans and exchanged fire with them. The Rebels then fled toward the battleground. Pino's troops began to pursue them, but received other orders to cut off some enemy wagons. They discovered an abandoned Confederate ammunition train and blew it up, and the destruction of these supplies was extremely detrimental to future Confederate operations. By the time Pino's troops had accomplished this objective and returned to the fort, it was 10:30 P.M. and the battle was long over.

In the days after the battle, the "blackwash" of the native soldiers spread quickly. One regular army officer wrote, "The militia have all run away, and the New Mexico volunteers are deserting in large numbers. No dependence whatever can be placed on the natives; they are worse than useless; they are really aids of the enemy who catch them, take their arms, and tell them to go home."[21]

On March 7, Canby wrote to another officer, stating baldly, "Do not trust the Mexican troops. If the Colorado or Kansas or California troops have not joined you, do not risk an engagement against the Confederates until they do."[22] He reiterated the warning in various pieces of correspondence during the following month, stating that no reliance was to be placed on the New Mexico troops except for garrison duty or for partisan operations. Ironically, the army would depend on these very soldiers to fight the Indians and safeguard the entire Territory for the next four years.

In the years following the Civil War some outrageously distorted charges against the native New Mexican soldiers were disseminated. One colorful example

was a speech made by Joseph McC. Bell, a Second New Mexico Volunteer who was temporarily assigned to serve as a lieutenant with the regulars the day of the battle. His talk, given to a fraternal organization of veterans twenty-five years later and ostensibly delivered to give an accurate picture of the military campaign in New Mexico in 1862, was rife with inaccuracies and racial slurs. Bell said,

> Of these two New Mexican Regiments (First and Second Volunteers) too little cannot be said of their valor nor too much of their inefficiency. Before the insidious advances of the "tortilla" they were invincible; the red hot *chili colorado* had no terrors for them, and against whole batteries of canistered beans, Caesar was nowhere. But for anything indigestible, as grape, unfermented, they retired with respectful celerity, which the demoralization of a single six-pound shot precipitated a stampede equaled only by a break of terrified buffalo. This little tribute to our Mexican allies . . . I cannot defer the pleasure of offering now, that there may be no mistake as to the romantic notion that very much of the valiant blood of the Hidalgos flows in the veins of the average New Mexican.[23]

Further, Bell stated that "at an early moment in our first fight," Colonel Carson's command, made up of native soldiers, forsook him, departing and leaving him to fight alone. He further embellished the tale by saying that "Kit went in single-handed and fought the fight out." Bell claimed Carson's regiment was never re-collected after they scattered, and that as a result of these events the government awarded Carson a promotion to general.[24]

Bell's ridiculous allegations epitomize the innumerable badly garbled, untrue, or exaggerated post-battle reports that have been printed over the years as authentic. Some self-styled experts confuse Col. Miguel Pino's Second Regiment of New Mexico Volunteers with Col. Nicolas Pino's Second Regiment of New Mexico Militia. Others have tarred all the New Mexico soldiers with an indiscriminate brush, while turning a blind eye to any shortcomings exhibited by the non-Hispanic troops.

It must be remembered, when researching or studying the events at Valverde, that the white English-speaking citizens of that era tended to judge all others as inferior; that the professional army men had little respect for citizen-soldiers; and that the New Mexicans, being mostly poor and illiterate, had neither a voice nor any influence or contacts in high places. As a result the New Mexicans were perfect targets upon which responsibility for the defeat could be placed, eliminating any threat to the professional soldiers' future careers.

This pattern of bias against the Spanish-speaking local soldiers was widespread and can be seen repeatedly in documents from that time. This is

particularly true of accusations of desertion by the New Mexicans,[25] but other sins of omission and commission are common as well.[26]

It is imperative that a more balanced overview of the Battle of Valverde, based on vigorous, unbiased research, become commonly disseminated. This is only just, both to the memory of those stalwart New Mexicans who gambled their lives in the service of the United States and to their descendants. •

Notes

1. Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, ed., *Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacon, A Nineteenth-Century New Mexican* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), p. 182. Chacon, a Hispanic veteran of the battle, perceived a lack of appreciation on the part of the Anglo population for the courage and dedication he felt the native men had displayed in their military service.
2. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* Series I, vol. 9. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1898), p. 487. Since the overwhelming majority of the men serving as volunteers and militiamen were Hispanics who had been born Mexican citizens, the implications of racial prejudice in the Anglo perceptions and treatment of them are inescapable.
3. Capt. Rafael Chacon of the First Regiment, New Mexico Volunteers, stated that he and his company, along with Capt. James Graydon's Independent Spy Company, were the first two Union units to cross the Valverde ford against the Texans the morning of the battle. See Meketa, *Legacy of Honor,* pp. 166–167. Capt. Pedro Sanchez, Juan Sarracino, and Ricardo Branch, all of the Third Regiment, New Mexico Volunteers, also fought as cavalrymen from early morning under the command of Col. Jose M. Valdez.
4. Don E. Alberts, ed., *Rebels on the Rio Grande: Civil War Journals of A. B. Peticolas,* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p. 46.
5. It is obvious from his later military career that Colonel (later General) Canby was lacking in the skills and temperament to be a successful field commander. In *The Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant,* vol. II (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885–86), pp. 238, 408–411, 518, 524–526, one can discover Grant's opinion of Canby as a general. After the Valverde debacle, Canby returned east and served under Grant while the war was still in progress. Grant complained that despite frequent urging, he was unable to get Canby to move his troops into position when ordered and as ordered. He grumbled that Canby could not "be got off in time" and stated that Canby seemed to be "deliberate in all his movements." At on point Grant noted, "I ordered him to go in person; but he prepared to send a detachment under another officer." Grant also cited a number of instances in which Canby not only disobeyed instructions but acted in a directly opposite manner. Grant's evaluation of Canby as a military leader makes it clear that he saw him as an excellent bureaucrat, but a very poor field officer who lacked confidence and courage.
6. There have been several exceptions. For earlier research that questioned some aspects of the native troops' role at the battle, see William I. Waldrip, "New Mexico during the Civil War," *New Mexico Historical Review* 28, No. 3

(1953):163–282 and Darlis A. Miller, "Hispanos and the Civil War in New Mexico: A Reconsideration," *New Mexico Historical Review* 54, No. 2 (1979) 105–123.

7. *New Colorado and the Santa Fe Trail* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1880), p.170.
8. Meketa, *Legacy of Honor,* pp. 169–170.
9. J. Robert Seynn, ed., "A Soldier in New Mexico, 1860–1885," *El Palacio* 65 (August 1958), pp. 143–145. This is a bit theatrical. Capt. Benjamin Wingate did not die immediately but lingered on before succumbing on June 1 to complications arising from his shattered leg. A number of sources representing fighters from both sides, however, verify that Wingate and his troops were indeed heading toward the captured guns and laying down heavy fire in an attempt to retake them when Wingate was seriously wounded.
10. Nolie Mumey, ed., *Bloody Trails along the Rio Grande: A Day-to-day Diary of Alonzo Ferdinand Ickis, 1836–1917* (Denver: Old West, 1958), p. 82.
11. William Wallace Mills, *Forty Years at El Paso, 1858–1898* (Chicago: Press of W. B. Conkey, 1901), pp. 56–59. Mills, of course, was in error when he says that only two companies were left in position to protect McRae's guns.
12. Plympton to Henry R. Selden, 24 February 1862, part 1, entry 3183, Records of the U.S. Continental Commands, 1821–1920, Record Group 393, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
13. While the New Mexicans were accused of "breaking from their positions" and running, the actions of the Colorado troops who also fell back at the same time from the same attack are described as follows: "On the left, the Colorados were forced into the river by the prodigious weight of the enemy's columns." See Orvando J. Hollister, *Colorado Volunteers in New Mexico, 1862* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelly and Sons, 1962), pp. 180–181. No consideration seems to have been given to the possibility that the New Mexicans were overwhelmed. After reading all the various reports it becomes clear that *no group* on the battlefield—New Mexico Volunteers, regular army men, or Colorado Volunteers—can assert that none of their men retreated from the fighting. Then it becomes a matter of semantics—one man's cowardly rout might be termed a strategic withdrawal by another.
14. *War of the Rebellion,* Series I, vol. 9, pp. 515, 520.
15. This is not to impugn the honesty of these men. Some, like Hollister, state right at the beginning of their manuscript that they can vouch only for the portion that is their eyewitness account and that the rest was based on rumor and secondhand reports. Others, obviously, saw only what was going on in the small sector where they were fighting and perhaps misinterpreted the overall picture. Many allowed prejudice of one kind or another to bias their perception; some desired to exaggerate their own achievements; still others allowed their memories to become skewed with time—all normal human shortcomings, but ones that should be considered by researchers.
16. Col. Edward Canby originally reported three officers and sixty-five enlisted men killed at Valverde and three officers and 157 enlisted men wounded. A number of the wounded, however, succumbed in succeeding days and weeks. In an attempt to determine, once and for all, the final cost in death and suffering for the Union

troops at Valverde, exhaustive searches, screenings, and cross-checking were done with the following sources: the official reports of the Battle of Valverde in *War of the Rebellion;* the Fort Craig post returns; individual military service records of the involved volunteer soldiers, from the National Archives; a report of killed, wounded, and missing U.S. troops from the Battle of Valverde (part 1, entry 3183, Records of the U.S. Continental Commands, 1821–1920, RG 393, NA); and "List of Officers and Enlisted Men Killed and Died of Wounds Received at the Battle of Valverde in the Territory of New Mexico Buried at Fort Craig," dated March 14, 1867, which was compiled by the adjutant general's office in Washington for those involved in the planning for the Soldiers' Monument that was erected in the plaza in Santa Fe.

17. The company strength figures are approximate in the sense that it cannot be determined beyond a shadow of a doubt that *every* single member of a particular unit was present on the battlefield that day.
18. *War of the Rebellion,* Series I, vol. 9, p. 503.
19. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette,* 9 May 1863.
20. *War of the Rebellion,* Series I, vol. 9, p. 490. The Confederates who, of necessity, had been held in place by Pino's volunteers during most of the day were able to reach the battlefield much more quickly. The Texans were mounted, while Pino's troops were afoot. In addition, Pino's men not only had to cross to the west bank of the river but also had to join with the ammunition train at the fort. Also, the rebels were approximately five miles from the battle site, while the volunteers had to travel at least seven-and-a-half and then recross the icy waters, which were reported to be five feet deep in some places.
21. Ibid., p. 634.
22. Ibid., p. 647
23. Joseph McC. Bell, "The Campaign of New Mexico, 1862," *War Papers* (Milwaukee: Burdick, Armitage and Allen, 1891), I: 47071. Bell's account contains many statements that research does not support, and should be approached with skepticism. Bell, himself, in later years claimed to have been wounded at the battle, sometimes declaring two and sometimes three injuries. Military records, however, do not list him among the wounded at Fort Craig and other papers state that he was on active duty the day after the fighting.
24. All this, of course, is rubbish. In addition, many eyewitness accounts state that Kit Carson's First Regiment retreated across the river and marched back to Fort Craig "in good order, almost as though they were on parade." Some of those making the assertions were Capt. Rafael Chacon, Capt. Edward Bergmann, Capt. Louis Felsenthal, and Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves, all of the unit.
25. Many examples can be found. For instance: On March 10, 1862, Maj. J. L. Donaldson, commander of the Santa Fe district, reporting on his march to Fort Union, stated, "Some volunteers also accompanied me, under Lieut. Col. Chavez *[sic],* but all of them except the lieutenant-colonel and some officers deserted on the march." Historians have subsequently reported this as fact. In reality, however, research has reveled that *none* of the soldiers deserted at that time. The six-month enlistments of about one-half of the men were up, and that is why they were sent home. The balance continued on with the group to Fort Union. Some of those reported as deserters were later officially exonerated by the government,

which admitted they had completed their tours of duty. In another instance, Alonzo Ickis, in *Bloody Trails along the Rio Grande,* p. 86, wrote from Fort Craig that "Forty of Kit's men deserted last night (March 6, 1862) they took ponies and arms with them." Actually, records show that approximately forty officers and noncoms from two of Carson's companies were ordered to leave at that time. They were sent to northern New Mexico on recruiting duty to obtain more personnel. Examinations of individual service and pension records turn up many more cases of volunteers who were erroneously and unjustly accused of desertion.

26. Again, a few examples are representative of a common pattern: Canby, in an April 11, 1862, report to Washington (*War of the Rebellion,* Series I, vol. 9, p. 550), speaks of a skirmish at Albuquerque, saying that "Captain Graydon's Spy Company, supported by the Regular cavalry," took part, but excludes any mention of the other unit involved, that of Hispanic Capt. Rafael Chacon (see Meketa, ed., *Legacy of Honor,* p. 184). Also, although never acknowledged in the official reports reproduced in the *War of the Rebellion,* Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves and a group of New Mexico volunteers, including men from Chacon's company, fought the Confederates at Apache Canyon on March 26, 1862, and also were involved in the burning of the Confederate supply wagons. Chivington officially listed units that accompanied him but failed to mention Chaves by name or the New Mexicans, even though it has been proved that Chaves led the major to the wagon train. See Meketa, ed., *Legacy of Honor,* pp. 183, 384.



Figure 9.1
Locket type case frame with photo of Col. Christopher "Kit" Carson in right frame, taken in St. Louis, Missouri, December 1864. Original locket case with photo said to belong to Wynkoop family. (Museum of New Mexico neg# 58388)

CHAPTER 9

Marc Simmons

Kit Carson at Fort Craig



During the thirty years *that Fort Craig was an active military post, many men with names famous in the history of the West were either stationed there or had occasion to pay a visit and enjoy the garrison's limited hospitality. Of all the celebrated figures associated with the fort, none looms larger than Christopher "Kit" Carson—trailblazer, mountain man, scout, Indian agent, and soldier. While he served only briefly at Fort Craig, in the late winter and spring of 1862, Carson was present at a pivotal time, for during his tenure there the New Mexico Territory fell victim to a Confederate invasion from Texas.*

Long before that event occurred, Carson had become familiar with the middle Rio Grande Valley south of Socorro. In 1827, the year after he first arrived in New Mexico, he hired out as a teamster, driving a freight wagon to El Paso at the wage of one dollar per day. The next year, having learned passable Spanish, he was employed by an American merchant as interpreter for a caravan from Santa Fe bound for Chihuahua City. On each of those trips, Carson would have ridden over the ground that would later become the Valverde Battlefield, and he would have passed within sight of the location of the future Fort Craig.[1]

In 1846, Carson was back in this area, having come from California with dispatches for Washington given to him by John Charles Frémont. Those documents bore the first news of the seizure of California by Frémont and Commodore Robert F. Stockton. With fifteen men, including his friend Lucien Maxwell, Carson traveled eastward over the Gila Trail to the Santa Rita copper mines, then continued on to the Rio Grande, striking it at a point below the later site of Fort Craig. Ascending the river, he encountered Stephen W. Kearny and his army about three miles below Socorro.

Kearny, having recently occupied and annexed New Mexico, was now moving toward California with the intention of claiming that province for the United States. He was surprised, and somewhat disappointed, to learn from Carson that the job had already been performed by others. Since his own guide,

Thomas Fitzpatrick, was not familiar with the Gila Trail to California, the general ordered Carson to turn around and lead the American dragoons back over the route by which he had just come. The dispatches would be carried on to Washington by Fitzpatrick.

Carson objected strenuously. Not only was the mission entrusted him by Frémont being disrupted, but he was also losing the opportunity to stop over at his home in Taos for a quick reunion with his wife, whom he had not seen in more than a year. Indeed, the same evening in camp, Carson seriously considered deserting but was persuaded to abandon that foolish course by Lucien Maxwell. Seventeen years later, as he rode by that former camping spot on his way down to Fort Craig, he must have reflected back on the dismal occasion when General Kearny had imposed upon him so severely.[2]

At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Carson was serving as agent for the Ute tribe, his home in Taos functioning as agency headquarters. When news of the hostilities reached Taos, he and several other loyal Union men, among them the old trapper Ceran St. Vrain, raised a pole on the Taos plaza, nailed an American flag to it, and flew the banner night and day in defiance of southern sympathizers, or so a popular story claims.[3]

A general order from the Military Department of New Mexico, issued June 14, 1861, called for the immediate establishment of volunteer regiments to help defend the territory from an expected Confederate attack.[4] Carson promptly resigned from the Indian Service and was commissioned a lieutenant colonel in the regiment of First New Mexico Volunteers. Initially command of this unit was given to Col. Ceran St. Vrain, who by early July was recruiting troops and mustering them in at Fort Union. His reputation attracted enlistments, but he met some resistance from native New Mexicans who feared the government would be unable to pay volunteers on a regular basis.[5]

In any case, Colonel St. Vrain suddenly resigned on September 17, 1861. Most general histories state the reason as ill health, but St. Vrain himself declared in his letter of resignation that it was "on account of a multiplicity of private business," which made him unable "to be efficient in the service." Forthwith, Carson was promoted to colonel and given command of the regiment.[6] J. Francisco Chaves was advanced to lieutenant colonel.

By early October the First Regiment of New Mexico Volunteers had taken up duty in Albuquerque. Carson continued to recruit volunteers to fill out the ranks of his eight companies. During the winter the men were drilled, and detachments were sent in pursuit of bandits and renegade Navajos. Carson brought his wife Josepha and their children down from Taos. Of this interlude, Capt. Rafael Chacon wrote afterward, "He was very loving toward his family. I remember that he used to lie down on an Indian blanket, in front of his quarters,

with his pockets full of candy and lumps of sugar. His children would then jump on top of him and take the sugar and candy from his pockets and eat it. This made Colonel Carson very happy, and he derived great pleasure from these little episodes."[7]

Upon receiving reports that a Confederate army was advancing northward from El Paso, Carson bid farewell to Josepha and his offspring and with the First Regiment and other troops left Albuquerque on January 23, 1862, for Fort Craig. He arrived February 1 and had his men camp just south of the garrison walls. They remained there until the rebel force, under the command of Gen. Henry H. Sibley, arrived on February 16.

Three days later the Union commanding officer, Col. Edward R. S. Canby, ordered Carson and the First and Second Volunteer Regiments to cross the Rio Grande and occupy a strategic height to prevent it from falling into the hands of the rebel Texans. The maneuver was accomplished, and Carson held the position overnight. On the following day, February 20, Canby with some of his regulars and artillery joined Carson, and they marched a short distance to the east, through rough terrain, and approached the Confederate camp. A brief skirmish ensued late in the day, after which Canby ordered a withdrawal to the fort.[8]

The next morning the Confederates began moving northward in fractured columns toward the Valverde ford. Canby, having decided to challenge them for possession of the crossing, started the bulk of his troops marching upriver. Action began at Valverde about 9:00 A.M. and continued throughout the day. One of Carson's early biographers, Edwin L. Sabin, declares without citing his source that Carson requested that his First Regiment be held in reserve. Since they were green troops, he was unsure how they would hold up under fire.[9]

In fact, the First Regiment was kept on the west bank throughout the morning. At 1:00 P.M., however, Canby ordered Carson and his troops to cross the river and engage the enemy, and they were soon fully involved in the battle. Positioned to the right of Capt. Alexander McRae's battery, Carson's regiment evidently acquitted itself honorably. Captain Chacon, who provides us the best account of the unit in action, says that the men fought "full of courage and almost in a frenzy . . . driving the enemy back through blood and fire."[10] Another source notes that Colonel Carson traveled up and down the line, shouting to his soldiers in Spanish to stand firm.[11]

Carson's own official report of the battle is quite brief and matter-of-fact, offering no hint of the high drama that surrounded events of the day. For example, he observes laconically that, later in the afternoon, "I received the order to retreat and recross the river. The movement was executed in good order."[12] The regiment's second in command, Col. J. Francisco Chaves, in a newspaper interview given many years later, is quoted as saying that he, Carson, and other

officers were dumfounded by the order, as they believed they were winning the battle on all sides. Receiving confirmation of the order, however, they left the field.[13]

The retreat, sounded by Colonel Canby, followed upon the loss of McRae's battery, which was overrun by the Confederates at the cost of numerous casualties. Captain Chacon goes so far as to declare that Carson's regiment "would have retaken the guns that the enemy had captured if the retreat had not sounded just as [we] were advancing on the enemy for that purpose."[14] In any event, Carson reported that he and his men were safely inside the walls of Fort Craig by 7:00 P.M. the same evening. It was February 21, and the Union troops had lost the Battle of Valverde.

The victorious Confederate army continued its advance up the Rio Grande, subsequently taking Socorro, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe. Colonel Canby remained at Fort Craig until April 1, at which time he started north with the main body of troops, intending to outflank the enemy. Near Socorro, a courier reached him bringing the first news of the Battle of Glorieta on March 28.

Upon Canby's departure, Carson was left in command of Fort Craig. It was his duty to prevent supplies and reinforcements from passing up the valley to the Confederates. Earlier, about March 20, Col. William Steele of the Seventh Texas Calvary had attempted to lead 500 men from Mesilla to support Sibley, but Canby had turned them back.[15] This small but dangerous force was known to be encamped downriver at Fort Thorn, and Carson was specifically warned to guard against a surprise attack. Indeed, his orders enjoined him to hold Fort Craig "to the last extremity."[16]

For this duty, he had seven companies of his own regiment, plus three companies from other volunteer regiments. During the next several weeks, Carson kept patrols in the field, scouting both north and south of the fort. Confederate Sgt. A. B. Peticolas records in his published journal that on April 15 the retreating Confederates engaged a company of Carson's regiment near Los Lunas and took twenty-five prisoners. He also writes, "We are expecting to have a fight at Craig, which we are going down to take."[17]

Territorial Governor Henry Connelly had learned of that possibility and remarked in a letter to Secretary of State W. H. Seward that "Colonel Kit Carson, with his entire regiment, . . . may offer some embarrassment to the safe retreat of the enemy."[18] Confederate General Sibley actually did contemplate attacking Carson and Fort Craig during his withdrawal from New Mexico, but his junior officers soon convinced him that in their crippled condition it would be far more prudent to bypass the fort, which they did.[19]

Colonel Canby arrived back at Fort Craig on April 22 and resumed command of the post. Relieved of duty there, Carson was soon ordered to

Albuquerque to begin recruiting a new volunteer unit, the First New Mexico Cavalry.[20] On his trip north, he was accompanied by Capt. Edward W. Wynkoop of the Colorado Volunteers, who has left us an amusing Carson anecdote.

> I traveled up the Rio Grande with Carson to Albuquerque. When we arrived the river was so high that to ford it was impossible. While we prepared to swim our horses, two boats were filling with gaily dressed *señoritas* about to cross to attend church. Just as one of the boats was pushing out with its fair freight, a rough looking fellow leaped into it from the bank.
>
> The boatman instantly backed his oars and told the man to get out, because the additional weight would endanger the lives of the women. The man refused. Carson approached and mildly pointed out his error, without avail. The man remained obstinate.
>
> Then, like a flash of lightning, Carson raised his sheathed saber and struck the man a tremendous blow on the side of the head, hurling him into the turbid water. The fellow sank like lead. As quick as thought, Carson plunged in and dragged him to the bank.[21]

With Carson's arrival in Albuquerque and assumption of a new assignment, the Fort Craig phase of his career came to an end. He had served at the post approximately three months, played a prominent role in the Battle of Valverde, and briefly acted as interim commander of the garrison. On March 13, 1865, he was promoted to brevet brigadier general of volunteers, and prominent reference was made to his performance of duty at Valverde. In spite of the obvious importance of this period in his life, all the Carson biographies have glossed over the months at Fort Craig. With the attention now being focused upon the old fort, new information will probably come to light regarding Carson's role in its early history. •

Notes

1. Milo Milton Quaife, ed., *Kit Carson's Autobiography* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1933), pp. 6–8.
2. Edwin Legrand Sabin, *Kit Carson Days,* 2 vols. (New York: Press of the Pioneers, 1935), 2:515.
3. The only source for the flag incident is Smith Simpson, whose veracity is questionable. This incident is reported in M. Morgan Estergreen, *Kit Carson, A Portrait in Courage* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 230.
4. Text of General Order No. 13 is given in Francis Edward Rogan, "Military History of New Mexico Territory during the Civil War" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1961), pp. 112–114.
5. Darlis A. Miller, "Hispanos and the Civil War in New Mexico: A Reconsideration," *New Mexico Historical Review* 54, No. 2 (1979):110.
6. Chris Emmett, *Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 249.
7. Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, ed., *Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacón, A Nineteenth Century New Mexican* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), p. 123. Carson overindulged his children. After an encounter, Gen. William T. Sherman described them "as wild and untrained as a brood of Mexican mustangs." Thelma S. Guild and Harvey L. Carter, *Kit Carson, A Pattern for Heroes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 270.
8. Martin Hardwick Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960), p. 78.
9. Sabin, *Kit Carson Days,* 2:689.
10. Meketa, *Legacy of Honor,* p. 169.
11. Ibid., p. 175.
12. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* Series I, 53 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), 50:502–503.
13. *Albuquerque Daily Citizen,* 21 June 1890.
14. Meketa, *Legacy of Honor,* p. 170.
15. Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign,* p. 167n.
16. Sabin, *Kit Carson Days,* 2:694.
17. Don E. Alberts, ed., *Rebels on the Rio Grande, The Civil War Journal of A. B. Peticolas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 102–103.
18. *The War of the Rebellion,* 9:663.
19. Rogan, "Military History of New Mexico Territory," p. 235.
20. He was there and at work by mid-May 1862, according to Estergreen, *Kit Carson,* p. 233.
21. Frank M. Wynkoop, "He Led the Way," *New Mexico Magazine* (16 December 1938):36.

CHAPTER 10

Lt. Col. Ezequel Ortiz, NMARNG Ret.

Northward from Valverde



The Battle of Valverde, *fought on February 21, 1862, was the first major conflict between Union and Confederate troops in New Mexico. The Union forces, commanded by Colonel Edward R. S. Canby, commander of the Department of New Mexico, comprised the First, Second, and Third U.S. Cavalry, portions of the Fifth, Seventh, and Tenth U.S. Infantry, and parts of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth New Mexico Volunteers. Also included in the Union force were Capt. James "Paddy" Graydon's spy company, a company of Colorado Volunteers, and about a thousand hastily collected, unorganized militia.*[1] *Colonel Canby reported that his forces totaled approximately 3,810 men.*[2]

The Confederate troops, commanded by Brig. Gen. Henry Hopkins Sibley, comprised the Second, Fourth, Fifth, and Seventh Texas Mounted Volunteer Regiments and two light howitzer batteries of artillery and numbered 1,750 men.[3]

Both sides spent the two days after the battle, February 22 and 23, under a flag of truce. This time was used to care for the wounded men, horses, and mules and to bury the dead on the battlefield near the Rio Grande. Col. William Steele, commander of the Texas Seventh Cavalry, went personally to Fort Craig under this flag of truce to request much needed medical and hospital supplies for the wounded. Under order of Colonel Canby, the items requested were immediately granted. While all wounded Union soldiers were evacuated to the confines of Fort Craig, the Confederate wounded were taken to Socorro, and some eventually to Albuquerque. William C. Whitford, in his book entitled *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War,* points out that the reports of the wounded and losses on both sides varied widely.[4]

Immediately after the dead and wounded were cared for, both General Sibley and Colonel Canby conducted staff calls with their officers for the purpose of contemplating their next courses of action. The victor, General Sibley sent three

of his most trusted officers, Lt. Col. William R. Scurry (deputy commander of the Fourth Cavalry), Lt. Tom P. Ochiltree,[5] and Capt. D. W. Shannon (who would later be taken prisoner at Glorieta), under a white flag with a demand for the surrender of Fort Craig. Colonel Canby graciously declined this most generous offer. Whitford writes that the three officers reported to their superior that the fort was strongly defended and would be difficult to take by assault or siege. What these gentlemen did not know was that they were deceived about both the number and the caliber of cannon mounted on the fort's bastions. Some of these cannon were indeed metal, but the large-sized ones were wooden "quaker-guns."[6]

Alternatives now available to General Sibley and his staff were to attack the fort, to turn back to Mesilla, or to march up the Rio Grande. Faced with this precarious position, and with a shortage of food and military supplies, a staff decision was reached to march up the Rio Grande, confiscate needed stores from the Union commissary, and procure additional supplies from the local population.

Although he had lost the battle, Colonel Canby was not yet defeated. He and his staff did have serious problems, however. The Confederate march up the river was an overwhelming threat to the entire territory, and it put the Confederates between Fort Craig and its only means of resupply. Faced with this dilemma, Canby also had three possible courses of action. First, he could stay and hold the fort, await the arrival of reinforcements, and block any Confederate retreat from the north; second, he could abandon Fort Craig, position his troops above the Confederate troops to impede their northern progress, and hope to unite with any Union troops in the north; or third, he could immediately engage in another battle with the Confederates in the vicinity of the fort. The scenario finally agreed upon by Canby and his staff was the first plan of action.

The Confederates, fully implementing their own plan of action, hastily moved northward. On February 25, 1862, they reached Socorro, where they were met by a portion of the Second Regiment of New Mexico Volunteers under the command of Col. Nicolas Pino. Colonel Pino, overwhelmed by numbers, surrendered and took an oath of neutrality administered by the Confederates. Moving ahead of the Confederate Army were the Union quartermaster and commissary officers with specific orders to remove or destroy all federal property that might be used by the enemy. When Capt. Herbert M. Enos, assistant quartermaster at Albuquerque, learned that the Confederates were thirty-five miles away, he ordered all of the ammunition and ordnance supplies that could be loaded in available wagons to be taken to Santa Fe. The following day, he ordered that buildings and certain supplies that could not be moved be set on fire. Before total destruction of these supplies, many were rescued by the local populace.

The Texas Army arrived in Albuquerque on March 2, 1862. Immediately

their flag was raised in the plaza, signifying that the town was now a possession of the Confederate States of America. Confederate Theofolis Noel wrote that, in Albuquerque, the torch was applied to more than six million dollars worth of commissary, quartermaster, and medical supplies without reason, except that the Texans were getting drunk on confiscated whiskey.[7] The Confederates, having secured all of the remaining supplies in and around Albuquerque, decided to continue their march northward. General Sibley dispatched Maj. Charles L. Pyron and his Second Texas Regiment to Santa Fe, hoping to secure more valuable and useful supplies.

Maj. James L. Donaldson, the senior Union quartermaster, anticipated the rebel move. He ordered that a wagon train of supplies stored in Santa Fe be moved to Fort Union. This train was escorted by the entire Union force located in Santa Fe. As in Albuquerque, buildings in Santa Fe containing remaining government supplies and equipment were set on fire. The only buildings spared from the torch were those which, if set on fire, would endanger the safety of the city. Gov. Henry Connelly was at this time compelled to accompany the army to Las Vegas and establish a temporary headquarters for the Territory in that town.

On March 10, 1862, elements of the Confederate Army entered Santa Fe. Three days later, Major Pyron's command arrived. The Confederate flag was raised over the old palace, which at that time served as the governor's mansion. While the flag was being hoisted in Santa Fe, General Sibley, still in Albuquerque, issued a proclamation to the "People of New Mexico." It was rapidly delivered throughout the seized areas. His intent in issuing the proclamation was to call attention to the Confederate victories to date and also to support the assertions in his first proclamation made on December 20, 1861.

This earlier "Proclamation of BG H. H. Sibley, Army of the Confederate States to the People of New Mexico" read as follows:

> An army under my command enters New Mexico, to take possession of it in the name and for the benefit of the Confederate States. By geographical position, by similarity of institutions, by commercial interests, and by future destinies New Mexico pertains to the Confederacy.
>
> Upon the peaceful people of New Mexico the Confederate States wage no war. To them we come as friends, to re-establish a governmental connection agreeable and advantageous both to them and to us; to liberate them from the yoke of a military despotism erected by usurpers upon the ruins of the former free institutions of the United States; to relieve them from the iniquitous taxes and extractions imposed upon them by that usurpation; to insure and to revere their religion, and

to restore their civil and political liberties.

The existing war is one most wickedly waged by the United States upon the Confederate States for the subjugation and oppression of the latter by force of arms. It has already failed. Victory has already crowned the arms of the Confederate States wherever an encounter worthy of being called a battle has been joined. Witness the battles of Bull Run, of Manassas, of Springfield, of Lexington, of Leesburg, of Columbus, and the capture of the Mesilla Valley of the whole force of the enemy by scarcely half their number.

When the authority of the Confederate States shall be established in New Mexico, a government of your best men, to be conducted upon principles with which you are familiar and to which you are attached, will be inaugurated. Your religious, civil, and political rights and liberties will be re-established and maintained sacred and intact. In the meantime, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the President and Government of the Confederate States, I abrogate and abolish the law of the United States levying taxes upon the people of New Mexico.

To my old comrades in arms, still in the ranks of the usurpers of their Government and liberties, I appeal in the name of former friendship: Drop at once the arms which degrade you into the tools of tyrants, renounce their service, and array yourselves under the colors of justice and freedom! I am empowered to receive you into the service of the Confederate States; the officers upon their commissions, the men upon their enlistments. By every principle of law and morality you are exonerated from service in the ranks of our enemies.

You never engaged in the service of one portion of the old Union to fight against another portion, who, so far from being your enemies, have even been your best friends. In the sight of God and man, you are justified in renouncing a service iniquitous in itself and in which you never engaged.

Done at headquarters of the Army of New Mexico by me this 20th day of December, A.D. 1861. Signed H. H. Sibley, BG, Army C.S.[8]

During the Confederate march from Valverde to Santa Fe, none of the Texas units met with much armed resistance. What they did encounter was a cool welcome at best and an almost hostile attitude by a majority of the local people. The conquerors expected to subsist off the land as they passed northward. At Albuquerque, Cubero, and Santa Fe, they were able to gather enough supplies for about three months. They also exacted money and confiscated property from families known to favor the Union cause.

The *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* would later charge that the seizures were

"strongly inconsistent" with Sibley's proclamation of 1861. On the same page, and in the column adjoining the general's proclamation of March 13, there was printed a report that the stores of the Messrs. Clark and Spiegelberg Brothers had been appropriated by the Texans.[9]

Theofilis Noel would later write that, as in Albuquerque, in Santa Fe the "burning out was repeated where in less than five days we were suffering the agonies of starvation from our own bits of vandalism."[10]

In Santa Fe, the Confederacy in the Southwest reached its apex. The majority of New Mexico and Arizona were now under its control. With supplies quickly dwindling and given the hostile attitude of the local people, the invading army could not sit idle. General Sibley decided to continue his advance toward the great stores of military supplies at Fort Union.

From a tactical point of view, the Confederate march into New Mexico was doomed to fail. A force of 3,700 men was wholly inadequate for the campaign that Sibley planned. This, coupled with the fact that every time they engaged the Union forces they engaged fresh troops, meant that Sibley's troops were no match for the 12,000 men commanded by Canby, Carleton, Slough, Leavenworth, and David Hunter.

The Confederate Army, expecting to extort provisions as they moved north, soon experienced the poverty of the territory. Their failure to capture Fort Craig later proved to be a major concern; the Union fort, left intact, was able to stop the northward flow of much-needed supplies.

The Texas Army was poorly disciplined, stemming from Sibley's poor example. His intoxication on the days of both the Valverde and the Glorieta battles added to the soldiers' antagonism. By failing to manifest strong qualities of leadership, Sibley contributed to the defeat of his own destiny.

If an army is to succeed on the battlefield, it must be able to sustain itself, and it must possess a good, workable strategic plan. Sibley was not a tactician, as is strongly indicated by his use of an eighteenth-century war of position and by his having depleted his command to garrison posts along his line of march northward.

Colonel Canby ignored all but the vital positions at Fort Craig and Fort Union, where he concentrated his army for blows against the Texas army. Realizing his weaknesses and supply shortages, Canby was very careful to avoid decisive victories; he could provide neither food nor medical care for large numbers of prisoners. In the end, Canby defeated Sibley by picking away at the Texas army and its ability and will to fight.

While the New Mexico campaign was barren of tangible results for the Confederacy, it was a source of lifetime pride for its participants. One of Peticolas's messmates, Thomas M. Field, even named his daughter, born nine years after the campaign, Glorieta Val Verde Field.[11] •



Figure 10.1
Confederate soldiers at Glorieta Pass on March 28, 1862
(Illustration Ezekiel J. Carpio)

Notes

1. George H. Pettis, "Confederate Invasion of New Mexico and Arizona," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War,* vol. II (4 volumes originally published in 1887–1888; reprinted in 1956 by Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York), pp. 105–106.
2. Canby reported a Union total of 3,810 men on the field and at Fort Craig.
3. Sibley reported a total of 1,750 Texans engaged, while the enemy had 3,500 on the field, 1,200 of whom were regulars.
4. William Clarke Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War* (originally published in 1906; reprinted in 1971/1991 by Rio Grande Press, Glorieta, New Mexico). Colonel Canby (vol. I, 9:493) reported Union losses as 68 killed, 160 wounded, 34 missing; Captain G. Chapin (I, 9:634) reported federal losses at 62 killed, 140 wounded, and for the enemy, 150 killed, 450 wounded. Dr. Basil Norris (I, 9:647), Union losses as 56 killed, 147 wounded, 17 of whom later died. General Sibley (I, 9:506), enemy losses at 300 killed and wounded, Confederate losses at 40 killed, 100 wounded. Colonel Thomas Green (I, 9:521–22), Confederate losses at 36 killed, 150 wounded, and enemy losses at 350–400 killed and wounded.
5. Ibid., p. 68. Tom P. Ochiltree later became governor of Texas and a member of Congress.
6. Ibid.
7. Theophilus Noel, *Autobiography and Reminiscences of Theophilus Noel* (Chicago: privately printed, 1904), pp. 61–62.
8. George Griggs, *History of the Old West,* p. 74.
9. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette,* 13 March 1862.
10. Noel, *Autobiography,* pp. 61–62.
11. Pedigree Chart and Peticolas Family Genealogy, M. E. Sorley, copy in author's possession.

PART THREE

The Late Indian Wars through the Present



U.S. Army Indian Scouts
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 14214)

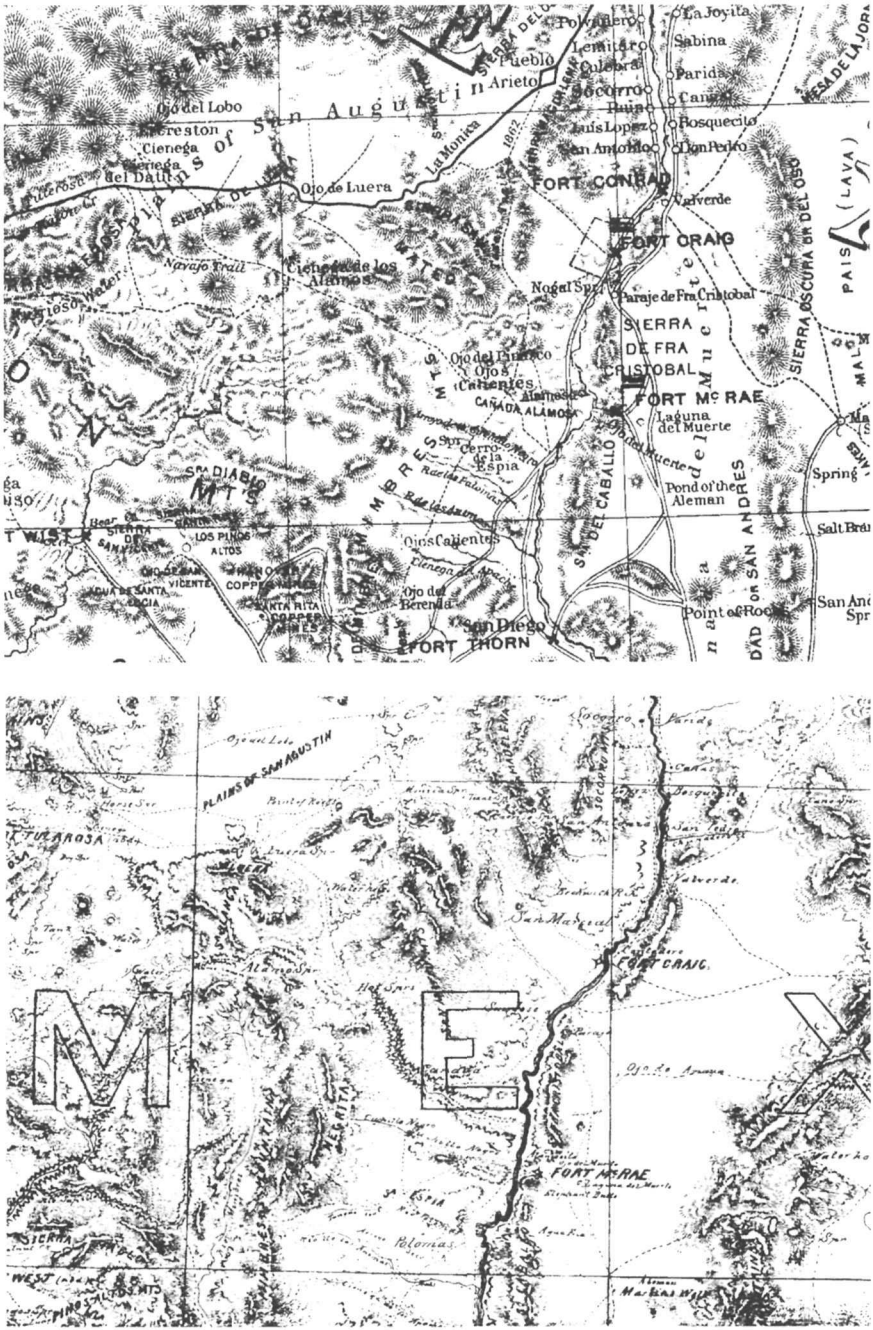


Figure 11.1 Portions of 1864 (top) and 1875 (bottom) Military Maps of the Territory of New Mexico showing Fort Craig and Ojo Caliente. (U.S. Army Topographical Engineers)

CHAPTER 11

Stephen H. Lekson

Ojo Caliente



There are many places *called Ojo Caliente (Warm Springs) in New Mexico. The Ojo Caliente of this paper is a group of hot springs near the head of Alamosa Creek, about 50 miles southwest of Socorro.*[1] *The landscape is crucial in understanding the place's history. Alamosa Creek begins in a basin between the San Mateo Mountains and the north end of the Black Range. Its upper catchment is over 300 square miles, but its upper channel is usually dry; all the water flows below the surface. The creek runs along the flanks of the San Mateos and cuts through a spectacular gorge or box between the San Mateos and the Cuchillo Negro Mountains, a front range of the Black Range. The gorge walls are shear, 100 feet high, and only about 20 feet apart. The creek flows through about ten miles of this box canyon before it opens up slightly in a few isolated patches of bottomlands. Eventually it comes out just above the modern town of Monticello (originally called Cañada Alamosa).*[2]

All the water gathered in the deep alluvium of the bolson between the San Mateos and the Black Range percolates downstream, underground, until it hits the geologic uplift of the gorge. At that point, the channel is very narrow indeed, and the water comes up in springs.[3] The springs of Ojo Caliente provide irrigation water for the whole Cañada Alamosa valley. The combination of water, farmlands, the gorge, and the mountain uplands on either side of Ojo Caliente makes it a very attractive place.

Pueblo groups built large masonry villages at Ojo Caliente, beginning at least by A.D. 1000 (and probably much earlier) and continuing until the late 1400s, possibly into the 1500s.[4] Some time after the Pueblo peoples left, the Apache became the lords of Ojo Caliente. We are not certain when the Apache first came to this site, but we do know that it had an enormous, almost incalculable importance to them later.

The Red Paint People

The Apaches who are most closely associated with Ojo Caliente called themselves the Tcihene, or "Red Paint People."[5] The red paint of their name was a rich red clay, exposed in a side canyon about one-half mile south of the warm springs. The Red Paint People were known to the outside world as the Warm Spring (or Hot Spring) Apache, a name given to them because of their close association with Ojo Caliente.

One of the first published references to Ojo Caliente is on the 1758 Mier y Pacheco map, which shows a canyon marked "Salsipuedes," which clearly refers to the Alamosa box.[6] Since Salispuedes means "get out if you can," we can assume that it was a place where people got caught and sometimes could *not* get out. It also seems reasonable to assume that the catchers were Apaches. A reference to Ojo Caliente that confirms this interpretation comes from don Fernando de la Concha's 1788 campaign against the Apaches. From September 23 through October 2 of 1788, Antonio Guerrero and 150 men from Concha's command reconnoitered the San Mateos and visited Ojo Caliente and Salsipuedes Canyon. According to Concha, Ensign Guerrero found much evidence of Apaches in the Ojo Caliente area, and don Fernando de la Concha noted, "I am sure that they have always lived there."[7]

There follows a sixty-year gap in the published literature. By the next time that Ojo Caliente comes to the fore, Mexico had thrown off the rule of Spain and had itself been defeated by the United States. In the difficult half century between Concha's campaign and Ojo Caliente's next major appearance in the historical literature, few white people penetrated into the Ojo Caliente area. As far as the published sources go, it would appear that *nobody* went into Ojo Caliente. Does that mean that nobody was home at Ojo Caliente?

John P. Wilson, who has recently reviewed the literature of this period, noted the absence of any mention of Apaches. He offers two tentative conclusions: There were Apache settlements prior to the nineteenth century, but the Indians ceased to live in the area, and the claims made in 1869–1871 for this country having been an old homeland or planting grounds had little foundation, perhaps dating only to 1855.[8]

Since Ojo Caliente has been considered the ancient homeland of the Warm Spring Apache, Wilson knew that these conclusions would be controversial. Wilson's conclusions are based on the narrowest (and therefore, most conservative) interpretation of the English language (including translations of Spanish documents) historical evidence; if it isn't mentioned in documents, then it didn't happen. Apaches, of course, did not document their activities in the historical records, but there are strong hints that they were indeed present at Ojo Caliente during this sixty-year historical gap. These hints are to be found in the



Figure 11.2
Geographical setting of Ojo Caliente
(photo Peggy A. Gerow)



Figure 11.3
Entrance to Monticello Box and hot springs
(photo Peggy A. Gerow)

oral history of the Apaches and in information recorded about the Apaches, hit-or-miss, by white contemporaries. These indications may not convince the historian, but they intrigue an anthropologist.

Specifically, we may be able to connect some fairly famous individuals, who were active during this sixty-year period, with Ojo Caliente. Mangas Coloradas, who died at an advanced age in 1863, reportedly considered Ojo Caliente a favorite campsite,[9] and Cochise, who was not young when he died in 1873, was also familiar with Ojo Caliente and had agreed to the site as a reservation.[10] Both men could have come to know Ojo Caliente after 1855, but Apache oral history suggests that the warm springs were in the family, so to speak, long before that. Victorio, who is closely associated with Ojo Caliente, was probably born about 1825. One story about Victorio places his birth at or near a Chihuahua hacienda. It is equally likely, however, that he was born at Ojo Caliente. Victorio's later life was a series of unmistakable messages that he considered the place home—as did most of the Tcihene Apache.[11]



Figure 11.4 Victorio
(Arizona Historical Society, Tucson AHS# 19705)

One of the more telling written accounts comes from O. O. Howard. General Howard visited the Warm Spring people when they were being held at Tularosa, far away from Ojo Caliente, in 1872; he reported that they wanted to return to Ojo Caliente because so many of them had been born there.[12] Presumably Howard would have been talking to leaders of the group, thirty-year-old or forty-year-old adults. A thirty-year-old man in 1872 would have been born at Ojo Caliente in 1842; a forty-year-old man in 1832. If Victorio was one of the Warm Spring who claimed Ojo Caliente as a birthplace, he would have been born there about 1825. There are no birth certificates or registers, because the Red Paint People did not document their lives in that way, but I believe that we may at least hold the verdict open. Some of the evidence supports continuous Apache use of Ojo Caliente during the apparent sixty-year gap. Corroboration might be found in the Spanish and Mexican archives.

Ojo Caliente: Reservation and Post

Fort Craig was established in part because Apaches were at Ojo Caliente, among other places. There were other military reasons, of course, but the troops at Fort Craig spent a great deal of their time chasing Apaches who lived, at least part of the time, at or near Ojo Caliente. The nineteenth-century military history of the Tcihene Apache is beyond the scope of this paper; Dan Thrapp has done an excellent job of that in his study, *Victorio and the Mimbres Apache*.[13] Instead, the remainder of this paper will consider Ojo Caliente as a site within that history.

By the late 1850s it was clear that some division of southwestern New Mexico would have to be made between the Apaches, who felt that they owned the place, and the settlers, who felt that the Apaches were in the way. After several false starts, the government created a reservation for the Tcihene at Ojo Caliente, under the supervision of the Southern Apache Agency.

Reservations had been sketched out on maps for the Mimbres Valley, and another had actually been surveyed on the Gila at Santa Lucia (now called Mangas Springs), another favorite spot of Mangas Coloradas.[14] Neither of those proposed reservations had been developed. The Mimbres Valley filled up with farmers growing crops to feed the miners in Santa Rita and Pinos Altos, and for reasons that are now obscure, the Mangas Springs site was also dismissed.

By the early 1870s many Apaches were living near the town of Cañada Alamosa (modern Monticello).[15] They had settlements up in the box and at Ojo Caliente. The agent at the time encouraged them to gather in this area. A reservation was proposed at Ojo Caliente, but the English-speaking residents of the Rio Grande towns did not approve.

This movement to establish a reservation at Ojo Caliente occurred shortly after some of the townsfolk of Tucson had attempted their own final solution to

their Apache problems at Camp Grant. There was a terrible massacre of Apaches at Camp Grant, and at least some of the citizens of southern New Mexico approved of this as an approach to the problem. One wrote:

> are we forever to be at the mercy of these thieving murderous Apaches, who have a "house of refuge" at Alamosa; if so, the sooner we know the better, because the citizens of this county are determined to put a stop to it, and if they carry out their program the Camp Grant Massacre will be thrown entirely in the shade, and Alamosa will rank next to Sand Creek.[16]

The residents of Cañada Alamosa were seen as being altogether too cozy with the Apaches. The citizens of Mesilla and other Rio Grande towns accused the people of Cañada Alamosa of furnishing the Apaches with guns and liquor, and a market for plunder.[17]

Vincent Colyer was sent out by the Indian Commissioner to deal with this problem,[18] and his solution was to remove the Warm Spring Apaches from harm's way. Colyer, with a detachment from Company K, Fifteenth Infantry, rode the northern route to Ojo Caliente, up Milligan Gulch, around the north end of the San Mateos (probably stopping at Monica Springs), and down the open valley of the uppermost Alamosa. It took them three days to cover this ninety-mile route. He was met at Ojo Caliente by Agent Piper of the Southern Apache Agency, who had ridden right up the canyon from Alamosa.[19] Those were the two routes from Fort Craig to Ojo Caliente: the first to the north around the San Mateos, and the second down the Rio Grande to San Jose, up Alamosa Creek to Cañada Alamosa, and then up through the box canyon to the warm springs.

Colyer did not think that Ojo Caliente was the right place for the Warm Spring Apaches because there was not enough agricultural land there for the farms he was planning. He was probably wrong. A later surveyor estimated that 1,000 acres could have been irrigated from the springs. Nevertheless Colyer moved the Apaches, over their protests, to a new reservation at Tularosa, fifty miles west of Ojo Caliente, in 1872. They hated it. They hated it so much that they convinced their agent and the military and the rest of the government to let them return to Ojo Caliente, which finally became their reservation by Executive Order on April 9, 1874. Its size was amended by a second Executive Order on December 12, 1875.[20]

The authorities considered moving other bands of the Chiricahua in with the Warm Spring at Ojo Caliente. Tom Jeffords, the agent for the Chiricahua in southeastern Arizona, strongly supported this move; he expressed his opinion when he wrote: "I know the locality well, and I know of no other place better adapted to make a good home for the Indians."[21]

Jeffords's opinion was shared by many others who knew the Apaches. John Ayer, who had been the Southern Apache agent in 1868, offered his assessment. In March of 1874, he wrote Superintendent Dudley, in Santa Fe, from Fort McRae:

> The country around Ojo Caliente is the finest grazing and pasture in the territory and well adapted for agriculture. . . . Designing people know that the Apache Indians love and worship this place, the consequence is they are taking up land there expecting when the Apaches are moved there to bring claims against the government on that account.[22]

One of the most significant private holdings was that of Victor Rouiller (or Ramiller) and his partner, a man named Hill, who settled in the area in 1872.[23] Rouiller was building a sawmill, using the flow of the springs for power, at Ojo Caliente at the very time when Ayer was expressing his concerns about private land holdings. Two years later, the commander at Fort McRae requested 40,000 board feet of lumber from him to build a barracks.[24]

Across the creek from Rouiller's new mill, the original agency buildings were built out of lumber salvaged from buildings of the short-lived Tularosa Reservation. In November of 1874, the Superintendent in Santa Fe sought authorization for a new and more substantial establishment at Ojo Caliente. Superintendent Dudley apparently contracted with William Rosenthall of Santa Fe, an important figure in the profitable reservation supply business, to erect the buildings. Washington rejected Dudley's request, however, demanding more detailed plans.[25] Most of the structures at Ojo Caliente were built between 1874 and 1877. The original contract was with William Rosenthall, but at least two of the buildings and two corrals were constructed by Jesus Garcia, for a cost of $750, in September 1874. Most of the other buildings were erected in 1875–1876.[26] Just when each building finally got built, and who paid for the work, is not entirely unclear. Control passed back and forth from the army to the Indian agent, and it is possible that the army paid for some of them.

Robert B. Willison, the General Land Office surveyor who described Ojo Caliente in 1877, listed the agency and post buildings as follows:

> A large store-house and issue room (122½ feet by 33 feet)
> A substantial Agent's building (71½ feet by 42 feet)
> with an attached stables and carriage house offices (51 by 34½ feet)
> Hospital, school, and council-room building (54 by 36 feet)
> Blacksmith and carpenter's shop (19 by 36½ feet)
> Employees' quarters (34½ by 67½ feet)

J. P. Chase's store and home (80 by 100 feet)
Slaughter corral for beef issue
Other corrals

Ojo Caliente was described in 1878 as follows: "The buildings are good, consisting of two sets of officers quarters, a small barracks, a trader's store and house and a good corral."[27]

In April 1877, John Clum spent a memorable week (described below) at Ojo Caliente. Writing sixty years after the fact, he described the buildings:

> The main agency buildings faced the east, [with a porch] fronting on a large parade ground. About fifty yards to the south stood a large commissary building (with large swinging doors) which, happily, was vacant. From this commissary building a row of employee quarters extended eastward along the south end of the parade ground, while the east and north limits of the parade ground were marked by a deep ravine.[28]



Figure 11.5
Detachment Company "F" 23rd Infantry, Troop "E" Fourth Cavalry at Fort Ojo Caliente, on Cañada Creek above Monticello, New Mexico, on April 1, 1882. (Museum of New Mexico neg# 56594)

Wartime

The military presence at Ojo Caliente became formal when Agent Thomas received a small detachment of the Eighth Infantry from Fort Craig. This deployment was authorized as early as January 12, 1871, but troops did not arrive until September 2. Thomas requested additional troops, and a cavalry detachment followed in December.[29] These troops were intended for the control of the Apaches, but other duties were found for them as well. In 1875, the agent requested the use of military force to evict civilian trespassers from the reservation.[30]

In 1877, the U. S. government decided to concentrate all Apaches on one large reservation in central Arizona. Late in April of that year, John Clum, with a small body of Apache police, arrived at Ojo Caliente to round up the Chiricahua. Clum hid his forces inside the buildings, lured some of the Apache leaders into the "plaza" or parade ground, and trapped them there. One of the Apaches caught in this trap was Geronimo. When Geronimo later became famous, Clum did not hide this story from the world. As he told the story, Clum personally disarmed Geronimo: "I took his gun from his *[sic]*—a bit rudely perhaps—and the same is still in my possession, a much prized trophy of that expedition."[31] This rifle, a much-mended 1870 Springfield 50-70, is now in the collections of the Arizona Historical Society.

Clum departed for San Carlos with most of the Warm Spring Apache. Special Agent Whitney was instructed to inventory the buildings and property, fire his employees, discontinue his contracts, and send all his supplies to Mescalero.[32] A small military detachment was left to guard the buildings.

The Warm Spring were marched to a site near San Carlos called Camp Goodwin,[33] and Camp Goodwin became the Bosque Redondo of the west. It had been a military camp and had acquired a deserved reputation as a death post owing to the prevalence of malaria. At any given time, most of the garrison was down with malaria, and finally the army moved its troops out to healthier grounds. Clum then moved the Apaches in. They hated it. Victorio offered many reasons for wanting to leave Camp Goodwin and return to Ojo Caliente. Perhaps the most important of his reasons sounds almost silly in the historical records: Victorio said the water didn't agree with them.[34] It was not the water, of course, but the mosquitoes and the malaria that they carried. The Warm Spring Apache were dying at Camp Goodwin.

In September 1877, Victorio and 310 Apaches broke out. They headed north and east, in the general direction of the Mogollons and home, and they got there—but not directly. First they surrendered at Fort Wingate, in New Mexico, on the condition that they be returned to Ojo Caliente. Thomas V. Keams was instrumental in the negotiations.[35] The authorities at Fort Wingate were in a panic

to keep the Apaches away from the Navajo reservation, and sending them back to San Carlos was clearly out of the question, at least for the moment. Colonel Hatch, the military commander of New Mexico, decided on his own authority to declare them prisoners-of-war and send them back to Ojo Caliente under army control. Hatch had to make this decision without reference to his commander because the telegraph lines were out of order.[36] He sent twenty-five infantry men to Ojo Caliente to get the facilities ready, and then detailed two companies of the Ninth Cavalry to escort the POWs from Wingate to Ojo Caliente.

The Apaches had been largely disarmed at Wingate; when they arrived at Ojo Caliente, about November 10, they were dismounted as well. The list of confiscated items includes thirty-eight horses, three mules, and two burros and a strange assortment of weaponry: six lances, eight bows, three pistols, six muzzle-loading muskets, and one Springfield rifle. By November 15, about 250 Indians were there. They were counted first daily and then weekly. The army treated the POWs with sympathy, but still maintained the restrictions appropriate to their status. The Apaches could leave the area only with a pass. A number of these passes are preserved at the National Archives and they are poignant documents. Passes were issued for Victorio and other men to leave the camp, armed, to hunt, and for Apache women to "gather herbs"; in effect, these were permits for the traditional Apache lifestyle before the coming of the Europeans.[37]

In March of 1878, Ojo Caliente was listed as a subpost of Fort Craig; a small detachment of about ten infantrymen was posted to Ojo Caliente from Fort Craig, where they were joined by small detachments of the Ninth Cavalry. Tom Keams stayed on as interpreter, and a special civilian agent (Whitney) was soon appointed. The establishment also included a surgeon, from Fort Craig, and several civilian employees.[38]

In July, Capt. Charles Steelhammer and thirty-four men of Company G, Fifteenth Infantry were sent out from Fort Craig to reinforce Ojo Caliente. Steelhammer became an eloquent advocate for his prisoners. He wrote a long letter recounting the Apaches' desire to stay at Ojo Caliente: "The Indians wished to say that they are happier than they have ever been were it not for that they feared removal." At exactly the same time that Steelhammer was pleading the Apaches' case for staying at Ojo Caliente, the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) was directing the authorities in New Mexico to return them to San Carlos.[39]

The Warm Spring Apache

Since the escape from San Carlos by Victorio and his group, a bitter jurisdictional dispute had developed between the army, which was paying for the rations that fed the Warm Spring people, and the OIA. The army wanted the Apaches to stay at Ojo Caliente and to have the Indian Commission take over their care and

feeding; the Apaches very clearly wanted to stay there, too. Unfortunately, in August of 1877, a week before Victorio's people had broken out of San Carlos, the Ojo Caliente reservation was returned to the public domain and thrown open for settlement. News of this decision did not reach the authorities in New Mexico and no one tried to homestead the reservation, but the legal status of the land was the major reason given for OIA's reluctance to settle the Warm Spring permanently back on their old turf.

In December of 1877, a General Land Office surveyor ran the lines of the five sections around the agency preliminary to disposal of the property.[40] The OIA felt Ojo Caliente was legally beyond the pale; it could not be returned to reservation status. The commissioner ordered the Apaches moved to Fort Sill; the army said no.[41] Finally, in the fall of 1878, the OIA decided to send the Apaches back to San Carlos.

That decision launched the famous Victorio wars of 1879 and 1880.[42] Hatch tried to turn the buildings at Ojo Caliente back over to the OIA, but events negated the exchange. From 1879 through 1881, the army needed Ojo Caliente as a base of operations.[43]

It was during this period that Ojo Caliente hit its stride as a military post. A small detachment of Company H, Fifteenth Infantry was usually on duty, but the major garrison was Company E of the Ninth Cavalry.[44] During the Victorio wars, the garrison strength at Ojo Caliente was about sixty-five—large enough to discourage direct attack, but small enough to be dangerous. During September of 1879, for example, about fifty-five men of Company E, Ninth Cavalry, commanded by Capt. A. E. Hooker and Lt. F. B. Taylor, shared the post with about seven infantrymen of the Fifteenth Infantry. Earlier in that month, Victorio had made off with the entire horse herd, killing the guards.

The danger to the small garrison is apparent from the report of another incident that occurred during September 1879:

> On the morning of September 28, the mail escort of 5 men of the company, First Sergt. Henry Roberson commanding was attacked in the canyon about two miles below Ojo Caliente, by a large party [estimated from 50 to 70] of hostiles (Victorio's band), many of them mounted on cavalry horses, a brisk engagement ensued. The mail party (in a 4 mule escort wagon) rapidly retreating on the camp of the company narrowly escaping capture and death, an attempt to cut off the retreat being frustrated by the most opportune intervention of Sergt. James Williams with a small hunting party of the company, which arrived and opened fire just in time at the point in the canyon where the hostile attempted to cut off the retreat of the mail party which together with the hunting party

> were pursued almost into the camp of the company. The company was at once deployed upon the surrounding hills and remained under arms the remainder of the day and most of the time to the end of the month, as it was evidently the intention of the hostiles, had they not been discovered in time, to surprise and capture the remaining herd of horses and mules and should they have succeeded in drawing the main force of the company out into the mountains to *take, plunder, and destroy the buildings and property* at Ojo Caliente including the reserve *arms, ammunition, and supplies* pertaining to the company.
>
> Under cover of night on the 28th, a mail party of 5 mounted men, Sergt. Wm. Howard commanding, was sent in to Paraje [60 miles distance] with the mail and dispatches, running upon a small party of Indians in the canyon (above Canada Alamosa) but getting through safely. On the return trip, on the night of the 30th, Sergt. Howard's party was attacked by a party of about 20 mounted hostiles near and about two miles *below* the town of Canada Alamosa and after a brisk running fight, succeeded in getting away from the Indians, with the mail, and returned to Paraje, and there awaited assistance from the company.[45]

For short periods during the Victorio campaign, as many as 250 troops of the Third Battalion of the Ninth Cavalry were stationed at Ojo Caliente. Victorio was chased south, into Mexico, and there he and his people were finally destroyed by Mexican troops. The companies of the Third Battalion were quickly transferred back to the posts from which they came, and troop strength at Ojo Caliente dropped to about twenty-five men of Company H, Fifteenth Infantry. The Fifteenth provided small detachments of men for the post through the remainder of 1880. Strangely, Ojo Caliente appears to have been redesignated as a subpost of Fort Craig in November 1880; perhaps it had lost that official designation when the lands returned to the public domain in 1877.[46]

When the campaign against Nana began in New Mexico in 1881, Company D of the Ninth Cavalry was posted back to Ojo Caliente.[47] During this campaign, as many as three companies of the Ninth were present at the post, but the constant garrison was Company D. Toward the end of 1881, Company D was replaced by Company C of the Ninth, and after Nana had escaped back into Mexico and things quieted down, the cavalry was replaced briefly by a small detachment of the Twenty-third Infantry. A full company of the Fourth Cavalry, Company E, joined the infantry detachment late in 1881. They were commanded by Capt. Charles Hatfield and Lt. M. J. Jenkins. They were the last garrison of the post.[48]

In the monthly records of Fort Craig, Ojo Caliente was discontinued as a subpost in September of 1881, but it continued as a "field station." Troop E of

the Fourth stayed on through October of 1882. It was an eventful, if not historic, tour. A remarkable number of men deserted, including the first sergeant. Lieutenant Jenkins, the second in command, was court-martialed. The Fourth Cavalry were the last troops stationed at Ojo Caliente, which was officially vacated and abandoned on October 5, 1882.[49] It seems likely, however, that troops passed through the old post and camped there during later scouts through the Black Range.

Peacetime

The buildings of the old agency, and the prime real estate around it, were finally sold in 1885. "The Ojo Caliente Indian Reservation containing 3,200 acres, some buildings, and some fine medicinal springs is to be sold at Las Cruces Land Office on February 27th next. No bids for less than $15,000 are to be received."[50]

In 1909, Ojo Caliente was considered for relocation of Chiricahua POWs at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Four Apaches, including two Warm Spring Apaches, visited possible relocation sites, including their old home at Ojo Caliente. Only a few small parcels were available at Ojo Caliente; the rest were owned by white families. But the Warm Spring Apache at Fort Sill preferred those few parcels to any other alternative.[51] An army lieutenant polled some of the Apaches at Fort Sill on August 22, 1909. One elder told him:

> We want to stay here until they can send us to Ojo Caliente. . . . Of all the places there be to put us, do not send us anywhere but to our old home. There is the only place we want to go. That is all I have to say.[52]

And his feelings represented those of almost all of the old Warm Spring people. Ultimately, however, the Fort Sill Apache were given the choice of going to the Mescalero Reservation or remaining at Fort Sill. They were not allowed to return to Ojo Caliente.

The buildings of the agency and subpost were occupied by ranching families through the 1920s, and the larger post buildings were used for community dances and other social functions in the 1930s. During this period (long after their military days), the buildings apparently acquired the names Fort Hall and Fort Harmony. Sometime in the next two decades, the roofs were removed from the adobe buildings, and by the mid-1950s the agency buildings at Ojo Caliente were in ruins. A few stubs of walls remain, but most have melted into low mounds, barely recognizable as buildings. •



Figure 11.6
Ruins of Ojo Caliente, 1991
(photo Peggy A. Gerow)

Notes

1. For a discussion of the historical confusion among various places called "Ojo Caliente" see Lee Myers, "The Mysterious Ojo Calientes," *Journal of the Council on Abandoned Military Posts* 7 (part 1, 1975):18–24.
2. T. M. Pearce, *New Mexico Place Names* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965), p. 103.
3. Kent Robert Carlton, "Tch-he-nde Apache Ojo Caliente" (1989), on file, National Park Service, Santa Fe.
4. Stephen H. Lekson, Karl Laumbach, Peter McKenna, and David Kirkpatrick, "Reconnaissance Survey of Ojo Caliente, Alamosa Creek, Southwestern Socorro County, New Mexico" (Tularosa, New Mexico: Human Systems Research, 1988).
5. Harry W. Basehart, *Chiricahua Apache Subsistence and Socio-political Organization* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959); Morris Edward Opler, *An Apache Life-way* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); John P. Wilson, *Between the River and the Mountains: A History of Early Settlement in Sierra County, New Mexico* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 1985) and "The Southern Apaches as Farmers, 1630–1870," in *Reflections: Papers on Southwestern Culture History* (Anne V. Poore, ed., Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1988), pp. 79–90; Albert H. Schroeder, "A Study of the Apache Indian: The Mogollon, Copper Mine, Mimbres, Warm Spring, and Chiricahua Apache," *Apache Indians IV* (New York: Garland, 1962).
6. John L. Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1979).
7. Adlai Feather, ed., "Colonel Don Fernando de la Concha Diary, 1788," *New Mexico Historical Review* 34(no. 4, 1959), pp. 285–304.
8. Wilson, *Between the River and the Mountain*, pp. 10, 41–46.
9. Eve Ball, *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), p. 34.
10. Dan L. Thrapp, *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), pp. 165–168.
11. See, for example, Ball, *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey.*
12. Commissioner on Indian Affairs, *Annual Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1872).
13. Thrapp, *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches.*
14. Frank D. Reeve, "The Federal Indian Policy in New Mexico, Part X: The Gila Apache," *New Mexico Historical Review* 13 (no. 2, 1938), pp. 280–313.
15. Vincent Colyer, *Peace with the Apaches of New Mexico and Arizona* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1872), pp. 40–43, 45.
16. Ibid., p. 8.
17. The history of Hispanic-Apache relationships in territorial New Mexico is yet to be written. To date that story has been told largely from English-language documents.
18. Colyer, *Peace with the Apaches;* Ralph Hedrick Ogle, *Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 1848–1886* (Santa Fe: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1940), p. 87.
19. Colyer, *Peace with the Apaches,* p. 10.

20. Ibid., pp. 10–11; Robert B. Willison, Notes and Plats, Township 8 South, Range 7 West, "Reservation" (1877), National Archives (NA), Record Group 75, Central Map File 1467 (a slightly different version is on file as "Field Notes, R 132, pp. 109–110e" at the New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe); for a summary of the Tularosa Reservation period see David Kayser, "The Southern Apache Agency," *El Palacio* 79(no. 2, 1973), pp. 16–23, and "Fort Tularosa: 1872–1874," *El Palacio* 79(no. 2, 1973), pp. 24–27; Reeve, "The Federal Indian Policy in New Mexico," pp. 298–303.
21. Letters of 31 May 1874, "Letters received from the Southern Apache Agency," Records of the New Mexico Superintendency of Indians (1849–1880), NA Microfilm Publication T21, rolls 20–21.
22. Letters of 13 March 1874, ibid.
23. Williams, Notes and Plats.
24. Letters of 21 May 1874, "Letters received from the Southern Apache Agency."
25. Kayser, "Fort Tularosa"; Letters of 6 January 1875, "Letters received from the Southern Apache Agency."
26. Willison, Notes and Plats.
27. Rogers Birnie Jr., "Report of Lt. Rogers Birnie, Jr.," *Report upon United States Geographical Surveys West of the One Hundredth Meridian,* George M. Wheeler, ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1879), p. 240.
28. John P. Clum, "Geronimo," *Arizona Historical Review* 1 (part 2, 1938), p. 39.
29. Report of December 1871, Fort Craig Monthly Reports, Returns from U.S. Military Posts, NA, M617, roll 262.
30. Letters of 12 May 1875, "Letters received from the Southern Apache Agency."
31. Clum, "Geronimo," p. 42.
32. Letters of 28 April 1877, "Letters received from the Southern Apache Agency."
33. Ray Brandes, *Frontier Military Posts of Arizona* (Globe, Arizona: Dale Stuart King Publisher, 1960), pp. 32–34.
34. Operations against Warm Springs Indians, "Letters received by the Office of the Adjutant General," NA, M666, roll 366, frame 485.
35. Ibid., frames 153, 158.
36. Ibid., frame 144.
37. Documents of 10 November 1877, Letters and reports regarding Indian Prisoners, Ojo Caliente Letters and Reports, NA, RG 393, part V.
38. Report of 20 March 1878, Fort Craig Monthly Reports; Operations against Warm Springs Indians, NA, M666, frames 292, 339; Reports of 1878, 1879, Fort Craig Monthly Reports.
39. Report of 29 July 1878, Fort Craig Monthly Reports; Thrapp, *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches,* p. 208; Operations against Warm Springs Indians, NA, M666, frame 334.
40. Operations against Warm Springs Indians, NA, M666, frames 311, 312, 321; Executive Order of 25 August 1877; Willison, Notes and Plats.
41. Operations against Warm Springs Indians, NA, M666, frames 253, 254ff., 261, 262.
42. For a history of this campaign see Thrapp, *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches;* Joseph A. Stout Jr., *Apache Lightning: The Last Great Battles of the Ojo Calientes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

43. Operations against Warm Springs Indians, NA, M666, frame 393; Ojo Caliente Monthly Reports, Returns from U.S. Military Posts, NA M617, roll 877.
44. Ojo Caliente Monthly Reports.
45. Report of September 1879, Ojo Caliente Monthly Reports.
46. Report of July 1880, Ojo Caliente Monthly Reports; Myers, "The Mysterious Ojo Calientes," p. 18.
47. For a history of the Nana campaign see Stephen H. Lekson, *Nana's Raid: Apache Warfare in Southern New Mexico, 1881* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1987).
48. Reports of 1881–1882, Ojo Caliente Monthly Reports.
49. Reports of September 1881 and December 1881–October 1882, Fort Craig and Ojo Caliente Monthly Reports.
50. *Santa Fe New Mexican Review*, 14 January 1884, p. 1, col. 7.
51. Ball, *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey*, pp. 180ff.
52. Ibid., p. 187.



Figure 12.1
Ninth Cavalry band, Santa Fe plaza, July 1880.
(photo Ben Wittick, Museum of New Mexico neg# 50887)

CHAPTER 12

Myra Ellen Jenkins

The Buffalo Soldiers



Of all the thankless *and unappreciated military service in the West during the years following the Civil War, the lot of the black soldiers had to be the worst. And yet, the buffalo soldiers had a higher rate of reenlistment and a lower rate of desertion than any other group. The descriptive appellation of "buffalo soldiers," by the way, was given them by the Indians whom they fought. The name was not intended as derogatory by any means but reflected genuine respect for the black troops as worthy foes, just as the Indians respected the buffalo. The fancy Tenth Cavalry emblem bore the buffalo at the top of its crest. Apparently the Indians saw a similarity between the hair of the black soldiers and that on the head and shoulders of the buffalo.*

The service of black soldiers had been of brief duration before they were authorized by Congress in the regular peacetime army after the Civil War. Following Abraham Lincoln's January 1, 1863, Emancipation Proclamation, black regiments were enlisted in earnest and received U. S. Grant's wholehearted backing. Explicit instructions were given that officers train these troops properly and vigorously oppose any prejudice against them. There was much grumbling on the part of many white officers and soldiers about serving with the blacks. In most cases, the officers overcame any opposition, for the black soldiers proved to be both competent and courageous. In the two years before the war ended, according to historian William H. Leckie, some 180,000 blacks had served in the Union army and 33,380 had given their lives in the cause.

With the Civil War over and the regular army much decreased in size, the establishment of a peacetime armed force was of concern to Congress, partly because of the "Reconstruction" occupation of the South and partly because of the so-called Indian problem of the West. The question immediately arose as to whether black soldiers should be incorporated into the regulars. The debate was

long (as debates in legislative bodies all too frequently are) and sometimes acrimonious. Sen. Henry Lane of Indiana, one of their most vocal supporters, pointed out that since blacks had so recently been made citizens of the United States, their right to serve could scarcely be denied. Finally, on July 28, 1866, an "Act to Increase and Fix the Military Peace Establishment of the United States" established that the cavalry would consist of from six to ten regiments; the infantry from nineteen to forty-five regiments, the artillery stayed at five regiments, and up to 1,000 Indian scouts were authorized. Two cavalry and four infantry regiments were to be made up of black soldiers, but with white officers. Cavalry regiments were to consist of twelve companies each, and infantry of ten, but often these were undermanned.

The Ninth and Tenth Cavalry were buffalo soldiers, as were the Twenty-fourth, the Thirty-eighth, the Fifty-seventh, and the 125th Infantry. William Loren Katz states that the Ninth and Tenth made up twenty percent of the U.S. cavalry forces between the Mississippi and the Rockies and between the Canadian border and the Rio Grande.[1] Col., later Gen., Edward Hatch organized the Ninth at New Orleans shortly after the Act was passed in 1866 and commanded it until 1889. He was also New Mexico departmental commander. Units of the Ninth served all over New Mexico, particularly in the southwestern part of the territory at Forts Cummings, Selden, Bayard, and McRae as well as at Fort Union, near Las Vegas, and elsewhere. From December 1880 to the end of 1881, Company C of the Ninth was stationed at Fort Craig after its reactivation following the action against Victorio. The Ninth Cavalry was also active in Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Utah, and Montana.

The Tenth Cavalry was formed at Fort Leavenworth, also in 1866, by Col. Benjamin Grierson, a distinguished Civil War officer, and for a time was the only military force in West Texas. The Tenth also served in Kansas, Oklahoma, Arizona, and at Fort Bayard, New Mexico, from 1886 to 1892. Later, "Black Jack" Pershing, so named for his black troops, whom he defended vehemently on any occasion, was a lieutenant with the Tenth in Montana. Pershing not only had black troops under his charge on this occasion, he commanded buffalo soldiers at San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War and in the 1916 Columbus Expedition as well. Fortunately, one George Armstrong Custer, with his usual arrogance, refused a lieutenant colonel's commission in the Tenth, one of the few good things that happened to that regiment, even though it was the Seventh Cavalry's loss.

All six black regiments saw duty in New Mexico, where their record was one of honor. Immediately after the Twenty-fifth Infantry was authorized, Companies A, E, F, and I were dispatched to Fort Selden in the summer of 1866. Company A then transferred to Fort Craig at the beginning of 1867, where it remained until



Figure 12.2
Col. Edward Hatch, Second Iowa Cavalry
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 128134)

the end of April when it was sent to Bayard and its place was taken by Company C, which stayed until November. Later that year, units of the Twenty-fifth were also at Forts McRae, Cummings, Stanton, and at Fort Bascom on the eastern plains. Company C of the Thirty-eighth Infantry arrived at Fort Craig in September 1867 and remained there until January 1869, when it was transferred to Fort Bayard; Company D of the Thirty-eighth Infantry arrived at Fort Craig in January 1869 and remained until November of that year. Companies A, B, and D of the Fifty-seventh Infantry were at Fort Union and Companies E and G were at Fort Bascom from July to October, 1866.

In addition to action against hostile tribes, especially Apache groups, buffalo soldier companies had the particularly controversial task of helping to suppress civil disorders. On June 18, 1878, a rider to the Army Appropriations Act forbade the use of Federal troops in assisting civil authorities as a *possee comitatus* or in carrying out laws without the permission of the president, obtained through

military channels. Despite this restriction, Col. Nathan Dudley, the commander at Fort Stanton, continued to use Ninth Cavalry troops to interfere in Lincoln County troubles under the thin disguise that he was protecting civilians. The black troops took part in forays against rustlers; they guarded stagecoaches and mail routes, the particular task of the units of the 125th and Thirty-eighth Infantries at Fort Craig; and they built roads and guarded survey parties.

In spite of these contributions, civilians did not always appreciate the services of the black troops, and there was often discrimination and violence against them in towns. One incident which took place at Cimarron during late March, 1876, also shows the misuse of troops before the Congressional action on civil disorder. Colfax County was at the time beset by a serious, explosive situation involving rival political groups. Leading ranchers and merchants, well-known attorney Frank Springer, and *Cimarron News and Press* editor, one-time manager of the Maxwell Land Grant Company, and later chief engineer for the Santa Fe Railroad, William R. Morley, formed one side; partisans of Gov. Samuel B. Axtell, territorial Attorney General Thomas B. Catron, and other members of the dominant political clique formed the other. Violence had been rife, with assassinations and saloon shootings. One of the ranchers, with a bad temper when he had been drinking and a deadly trigger finger drunk or sober, was ex-Confederate Clay Allison. Hoping somehow to ease the situation, Springer, Morley, banker H. M. Porter, Allison, and others drafted a letter to Governor Axtell inviting him to Cimarron to discuss their differences.

Early in the week of March 13, District Attorney Benjamin Stevens contacted these leaders and invited them to meet with Axtell when the latter arrived by stage on Saturday, March 18, stressing that Axtell wanted it to be a very quiet meeting. According to Norman Cleaveland, grandson of Morley, who narrates a graphic account of the situation in *The Morleys, Young Upstarts on the Southwest Frontier,* Stevens had an arrest warrant for Allison as well as a confidential letter from Axtell telling Stevens to take any measures to carry it out: "Have your men placed to arrest him and to kill all the men who resist you or stand with those who do resist you."

Meanwhile, a squad of Ninth Cavalry under the command of a Capt. Franklin Moore had arrived in Cimarron assigned to assist Stevens in the arrest. As Cleaveland notes, Allison would probably have been so outraged at the presence of black soldiers that he would indeed resist. But, the letter was leaked; the men did not meet the stage; Axtell, of course, was not on it anyway; and the whole plot flopped. Moore's troops did surround Allison's ranch house, but that worthy quietly submitted to arrest, then calmly walked away from the military quarters when they arrived back in Cimarron.

There was, however, an unpleasant epilogue concerning the troopers. Three of them went into the St. James Hotel Bar and asked to be served. An altercation ensued and two gunmen, a Davey Crockett claiming to be the nephew of the original and a Tom or Gus Hefferan, shot all three soldiers before they had a chance to draw their own guns. Historian Jim Berry Pearson, in *The Maxwell Land Grant,* sarcastically comments, "The townspeople, feeling that the two stockmen would not have behaved in such a manner had they not been inflamed by whiskey, freed them on the usual pleas of self-defense so that they might return to their sober and peaceful ways." Their peaceful ways consisted of riding their horses into saloons, stores, and offices with double-barreled shotguns cocked, but their days were counted when, in October, the sheriff and deputy faced them down. Crockett was killed and Hefferan was captured but later escaped.

The army high command itself had a discriminatory attitude toward the black soldiers, although the white officers who commanded them were often fiercely defensive about their worth. Other officers were all too frequently offensively contemptuous in their treatment of their fellow officers with black commands. While they served in some of the worst areas as far as geography, heat, and rattlesnakes were concerned, especially in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona, their problems did not stop there. As both Robert Utley and William Katz point out, the rations for the black soldiers were worse than those for white troops, and that had to be pretty bad; other supplies were inferior; their mounts were all too often broken-down horses or scrawny mules. Since they were for the most part illiterate, they lacked the skills for any but the most dangerous and menial duties. Even the official title set them apart: "United States Regiment such-and-such, COLORED." The beloved regimental banner with its buffalo was handmade, faded and worn, in contrast to the embroidered silk variety of the white companies.

The most sustained and arduous service by the Ninth Cavalry was during the grueling campaign against the wily Mimbreno Warm Springs Apache Victorio from 1877 through 1880, and then the furious six-week pursuit of old Nana and his little band after Victorio's defeat. Determined not to be forced from his Ojo Caliente region and Black Range fastnesses, this master of guerrilla tactics and lightning war strategy led the pursuing military from western New Mexico north into Acoma territory, into eastern Arizona, all along the southern border, in and out of Mexico, and across the Jornada del Muerto back and forth to the reservation of his Mescalero kinsmen. In January 1880, Hatch ordered his entire regiment to the south and took charge of the campaign himself. By late March, Victorio was camped at a spring in Hembrillo Canyon on the east side of the San Andres Mountains. Hatch's forces converged on the Apaches from three different

routes. Capt. Henry Carroll and two companies of the Ninth from Fort Stanton, the soldiers weakened by drinking from a spring charged with gypsum, staggered into the Hembrillo Canyon and were pretty badly mauled until a Capt. McLellan with a detachment of the Sixth Cavalry (white) came to their rescue. Victorio moved south along a mountain trail, actually paralleling at a short distance Hatch's larger force, which was moving north. Needless to say the Apaches got away. They split into two groups, with Victorio and Nana crossing the Jornada behind the soldiers and making it back to the Black Range, and then into Mexico. There Mexican troops virtually exterminated Victorio's band on October 14 at Tres Castillos.

Fort Craig had been deactivated in 1878, except for a caretaker group, but was reactivated in the summer of 1880 during the Victorio campaign and manned by a company of the Fifteenth (white). Following the defeat of Victorio, Company D of the Ninth Cavalry was sent to Craig and remained for a year. Buffalo soldiers of the Ninth Cavalry from various posts, especially Fort Stanton, bore the brunt of the July–August 1881 campaign against old Nana. This campaign marked the end of the steadfast service of the Ninth Cavalry in New Mexico. Shortly thereafter Hatch was ordered to transfer the regimental headquarters from Santa Fe to Fort Riley, Kansas.

The buffalo soldiers earned their laurels. Eleven of them in the West received the Medal of Honor. They certainly had one friend in artist Frederic Remington, who did them justice in sketches, paintings, and in his journals. Tough old Commander of the Army William Tecumseh Sherman, who did not approve of black regulars in the beginning, probably paid them their highest compliment when, in 1879, he felt himself forced to say, "They are good troops, they make first rate soldiers, are faithful to their tasks and are as brave as the occasion calls for."[2] •

Notes

1. William Loren Katz, *The Black West* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 201.
2. Robert Utley, *Frontier Regulars, The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 26.

CHAPTER 13

Darlis A. Miller

Captain Jack Crawford

POET SCOUT AND POST TRADER



In 1881 thirty-four-year-old Capt. Jack Crawford became the post trader at Fort Craig. Known throughout the West as "the Poet Scout," Crawford had gained national recognition as a government scout during the Sioux campaign of 1876 and Victorio's war of 1880. He also had published a book of poetry and appeared on the stage with William F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") in western melodramas. During the four years he served as post trader, Crawford established a home for his family at Fort Craig, and he also engaged in ranching and mining.

Crawford would gain even more recognition in later years. During Benjamin Harrison's administration, he served a four-year term as a special agent for the Justice Department, tracking down whiskey dealers who illegally sold liquor to Indians. And in 1898 he joined the gold rush to the Klondike in the Canadian Northwest, writing about his adventures for a variety of newspapers. During these same years, he pursued literary and theatrical fame. In his lifetime, he published seven volumes of poetry and more than 100 stories, and he copyrighted four plays. The last years of his life were spent as a public personality, touring the country as a popular lecturer. Upon Jack's death in 1917, newspapers across the country reported the event, one writer paying tribute in these words: "[Crawford] was a real scout, and a real poet—a man with a warrior's soul and the heart of a woman."[1]

The early history of John W. Crawford reads like that of a hero of a Horatio Alger story. He was born March 4, 1847, in County Donegal in Northern Ireland during the Great Famine. His parents, John Austin and Susie Wallace Crawford, were of Scots descent; his father was a tailor by trade. The family was poor, living in a cottage of thatch, the children without shoes or schooling. The senior Crawford's addiction to strong drink added to their suffering. One of Jack's earliest recollections was kneeling by his mother's side "praying God to

save a wayward father and husband."[2] The father emigrated to the United States in 1854, leaving his wife and five small children behind to eke out an existence. The senior Crawford left Ireland in part to escape his drinking companions and to start life anew. Childhood scenes of his father's dissipation and his mother's suffering were deeply etched in Jack's memory.

Susie Crawford soon joined her husband in the United States, leaving the children in Ireland with an uncle. But in 1861 the Crawford children sailed from Londonderry to join their parents in Minersville, Pennsylvania, in the heart of the nation's anthracite coal region. By the time the children reached Minersville, their father had enlisted in the Ringgold Rifles and was among the first of the Union volunteers mobilized in the Civil War.[3]

That same year fourteen-year-old Jack went to work in the coal mines to help support the family. Thus, the Poet Scout began his working career in the United States as a slate picker, earning a pittance of $1.75 per week.[4] Hundreds of Pennsylvania boys like Crawford spent their days in drudgery—stooping before the schutes amid clouds of suffocating dust, working ten or more hours a day, to pick slate and other refuse from coal as it moved through the breakers.

Crawford was different from the other boys, however—not in his formal education, for he had none, but in his optimism and determination to make something of himself. Crawford believed in the American Dream, and he never lost faith in that dream even as he approached old age. A man of action, Crawford expected to achieve fame and fortune through hard work and perseverance.

Young Crawford ran away from home twice to join the Union Army, but each time he was sent home for being too young and too small. On March 7, 1864, however, a few days following his seventeenth birthday, Crawford enlisted in the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania volunteers and then saw heavy fighting during the last stages of the Civil War. He was wounded twice, once at Spotsylvania and again at Petersburg, just days before Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. While convalescing from the first wound in a Philadelphia hospital, young Crawford learned to read and write under the tutelage of a Sister of Charity.[5] The written word seemingly mesmerized the young soldier, and he would never in his lifetime escape from its spell.

At the war's end, Crawford returned home and found a job in the coal mines, but tragedy struck the family in September 1867 when Susie Crawford died at age fifty after a brief illness. On her deathbed, fearing Jack would be like his father, she exacted a promise from him, that as long as he lived he would never drink liquor.[6] Jack kept this promise for the rest of his life, becoming one of the few teetotal scouts to ever work for the army.

Following his mother's death, Crawford moved to the mining community of Girardville, where he worked for the Preston Coal Company, and then in 1869

he became the town's postmaster. That same year he married Anna Maria Stokes, and within two years Maria had given birth to two children, Eva Lenore and Harry Wallace.[7] About the time that Harry was born, Crawford resigned as postmaster, and for the next four years he disappears from the public record. The biographical sketch that appears in Crawford's first book of poetry passes over these years and merely states that after his mother's death Crawford "struck out for the wild West."[8]

By the mid-1870s, when Crawford landed in the Dakota Black Hills, enthusiasm for developing the West had spread across the nation. The West beckoned to land-hungry settlers looking for new opportunities and independence away from the confines of older, eastern communities. When the flamboyant Lt. Col. George A. Custer verified rumors of gold in the Black Hills in the summer of 1874, the nation almost overnight became infected with gold fever. Since the Black Hills were a part of the Sioux reservation, the army patrolled the area to evict intruders, but it was fighting a losing battle. During the summer of 1875, an estimated 800 miners were illegally panning for gold in the hills.[9]

Exactly when Crawford first entered the Black Hills remains a mystery. Years later, after becoming a public personality, Crawford received an amazing amount of publicity, but most published accounts of his life are riddled with errors. Some even make the exaggerated claim that Jack was among the first seven white men to enter the region. Most likely he entered the Black Hills during the summer of 1875, and he may even have been evicted twice by the U. S. Army.[10] But the army soon stopped arresting intruders, and early in 1876 Crawford returned to the gold region as a correspondent for the *Omaha Daily Bee*. Elected chief of scouts by the Black Hills Rangers, a company organized to protect miners from angry Sioux tribesmen, Crawford was known throughout the Hills as "Captain Jack," a name he forever cherished, even signing letters to his children, "Your affectionate daddy, Capt. Jack."

During the first six months of 1876, the *Omaha Daily Bee* published more than thirty of Jack's letters, filled with details about camp life, practical advice to prospective emigrants, and descriptions of Dakota scenery and skirmishes with Indians. Readers of the *Bee* even had some knowledge of Jack's personal appearance, for a drawing of "Captain Jack" appeared in a four-page special supplement devoted to the Black Hills. In this illustration, Jack is dressed in buckskin pants and shirt, with a revolver and bowie knife at his waist and a rifle resting on his shoulder. He is sporting shoulder-length hair and a trim mustache and goatee—the same appearance he would affect before audiences in later years.[11]

The *Omaha Daily Bee* had sponsored Crawford's trip into the Black Hills to



Figure 13.1
Capt. Jack Crawford, "The Poet Scout" ca. 1889–90
(photo Catterlin, Museum of New Mexico neg# 9855)

gain accurate information about their mineral wealth, and Crawford faithfully carried out his mission, not only by talking to experienced miners but also by digging into the hills himself.[12] As much as any man, he hoped to strike it rich.

Crawford also immersed himself in the affairs of Custer City, the most important mining town in the southern hills. Soon after his arrival, he helped devise the laws that governed the town and was elected one of its twelve trustees. After Sioux warriors stepped up their attacks on the Black Hills miners, Crawford won the town's gratitude for his work with the Black Hills Rangers. Twice after Indians raided Custer City, he led the pursuit to regain stolen stock and punish the marauders.[13]

After Custer was killed on the Little Bighorn, Crawford joined Gen. George Crook's command as a military scout. He served on this campaign with his friend Bill Cody; when Cody became bored by a week's bivouac on the Powder River and left the command, Crawford succeeded Cody as chief of scouts of the Fifth Cavalry.[14] Crook's departure from the Powder River late in August 1876 marked the beginning of one of the most grueling marches in American military history. Unseasonable rains lashed the men almost daily; men and horses became mired in mud; and as rations gave out, the men subsisted on horsemeat.[15] Years later Col. Andrew S. Burt would reminisce with Crawford about the hardships they had shared on the march. He vividly recalled Jack squatting on the ground before a campfire "gnawing at a horse's rib fresh from the coals and glad to get the rib!" In September Crawford helped lead the charge against an Indian village at Slim Buttes, one of the few victories that Crook's command recorded.[16]

At the end of Crook's summer campaign against the Sioux, Crawford joined Bill Cody in touring the country, performing on the stage in western melodramas. Jack planned to return to the Black Hills when the season ended the following spring, but once launched on a theatrical career, Crawford's course was set. Henceforth he would find his greatest moments of happiness on the stage, entertaining audiences with poems, stories, and sketches of the American West.

Jack was twenty-nine years old when he teamed up with Cody, and his essential personality had already developed. Others described him as brave, generous, witty, and unpretentious. He was also a sensitive, kindhearted man, who wrote forthrightly of his love and affection for both male and female friends. Above all else he was honest and temperate, retaining in adulthood the values his mother had instilled in him as a child. His talent for versifying was so well known that in publicity for the Buffalo Bill Combination he was billed as "The Poet Scout of the Black Hills."[17]

After a successful tour on the East Coast, the Buffalo Bill Combination traveled to San Francisco and then performed in Virginia City, Nevada, where Cody and Crawford separated. Crawford soon formed his own dramatic

company and toured throughout California. But in 1878, the lure of adventure drew him to the Cariboo mining region of British Columbia. Failing to find fortune, Jack returned to San Francisco, where in 1879, he published his first book of poetry, *The Poet Scout: Verses and Songs,* a handsome volume containing seventy of Jack's best poems and several fine engravings illustrating his poetry.[18] Today it is a collector's item.

After returning from the Cariboo, Jack made plans to tour Australia with a play he copyrighted in 1879, *California through Death Valley.* He had opened a six-day engagement of the play in San Francisco at the Bush Street Theatre, and Alfred Dampier, director of the Theatre Royal in Melbourne, encouraged him to make the trip. But when Crawford failed to come up with sufficient funds to finance this venture, he offered his services as a scout to Col. Edward Hatch, commanding the Military District of New Mexico, then engaged in a frustrating campaign against the dynamic Indian leader Victorio and his Warm Spring Apache followers.[19]

In mid-June 1880 Crawford's name appears on the roster of civilians employed at Fort Craig, which was a base for Indian operations.[20] Jack soon was dispatched on scouting expeditions, looking for signs of Indians. These trips provided ample opportunity to survey mining prospects in the Black Range and Mogollon Mountains to the west of Fort Craig and in the Oscura and San Andres mountains to the east.

In September Col. George P. Buell, then mounting a massive expedition into Mexico to find Victorio, ordered Crawford to cross into Chihuahua to locate Victorio's camp. With a Spanish and an Indian interpreter for companions, Jack spent the next several weeks trying to pick up Victorio's trail. Although Crawford located the Apache camp, the Indian interpreter refused to enter the camp to talk to Victorio. Reluctantly, Crawford turned toward El Paso, Texas, where he wired Buell of his discovery. Crawford soon met Buell at the Mexican town of Palomas and the pursuit continued, with Jack now designated as Buell's chief of scouts.[21]

After learning in October that Mexican troops had killed Victorio at Tres Castillos, thus ending the campaign, he resigned as a government scout. Later Buell wrote Crawford a letter of commendation: "There is no doubt but what your scout after Victorio into old Mexico, and the rapidity with which you located him in the Candelaria Mountains, and your fast ride to the nearest post, from whence you wired me at Fort Cummings, was the cause which led directly to his death by the Mexican troops. . . ."[22]

During the year following his resignation as chief of scouts, Crawford decided to make New Mexico his permanent home. Prospecting trips into the mountains of southern New Mexico had convinced Jack that a fortune awaited the industrious miner. To gain a steady income, he accepted an appointment as



Figure 13.2
Jack Crawford's General Merchandise store ca. 1881
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 50893)

post trader at Fort Craig and then sent for Maria and the children to join him at the post. For the first time in more than six years, the Crawfords would be united in a stable household.

During the four years Jack served as post trader, he devoted his energies to exploiting the economic resources of southern New Mexico, a region poised on the brink of a dynamic mining boom. Crawford's decision to relocate his family to New Mexico signalled his boundless faith in the territory's future. Like other frontier entrepreneurs, Crawford would engage in multiple enterprises. While serving as post trader, he also filled government contracts, developed mines, established a dairy ranch, and expanded his land holdings. Later he would build a horse ranch in the foothills of the San Andres Mountains.

Crawford's first great mining venture in New Mexico, however, had ended in financial disaster. Soon after resigning as Buell's chief of scouts, Crawford became the "Chief Scout and Prospector" for the Lode and Placer Prospecting and Mining Association, headquartered in Denver. Several well-known Ohio and Colorado capitalists served as the firm's trustees. According to its prospectus, the company planned to raise sufficient funds to employ fifty men "who shall thoroughly prospect New Mexico, Arizona and the unexplored portions of Colorado . . . and to erect mills and smelters for the treatment of ores" to be taken from the newly discovered mines.[23]

In mid-November 1880, Jack was in Denver outfitting a party of about twenty-five prospectors, each of whom put up $100 and in return received 1,000 shares in the company. Each prospector also was to receive two dollars per day and board while in the field. Upon returning to New Mexico with his party, Crawford established a base camp near the military outpost at Ojo Caliente, located about thirty-five miles directly west of Fort Craig. From there the miners dispersed west into the Black Range and Mogollon Mountains.[24]

Hostile Apache bands posed a constant threat to the gold-seekers. On January 31, 1881, Captain Jack narrowly escaped death when a party of five Indians surprised him and two companions while they were prospecting in a canyon between Ojo Caliente and the village of Cañada Alamosa. In the fierce gun battle that followed, a bullet struck the breach of Jack's rifle and "glancing down cut a gash along the palm of his hand." When Jack reached Cañada Alamosa, the Catholic priest dressed his wound and then discovered that a bullet had pierced Jack's coat at the shoulder and another had passed through the skirt of the coat.[25]

Despite the Indian raid, Crawford's band of prospectors continued prospecting and locating claims. But Crawford soon learned that white man's perfidy could be as deadly to his plans as an Apache ambush. After spending two months in the field, Jack's party had exhausted its supplies, and company officials failed to send additional money. Jack concluded that the Denver capitalists were trying to sell stock in the company solely on his reputation as a scout and practical miner, without investing a penny of their own money. He did everything possible to alleviate the suffering of his stranded miners, even selling his gold watch and other possessions to buy them food. On February 28 he wrote a long letter to the editor of the *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, exposing the company. "It is all up," he began. "The cloud that has so long darkened my sky has burst at last. Lode and Placer is gone under."[26]

Despite this setback, Crawford found means to continue prospecting in the Black Range. On April 25 he penned a humorous letter to the Santa Fe *Military Review* from his cabin in Chloride City, the center of the recently established Apache Mining District located about twenty miles south of Ojo Caliente. "Houses are going up one after another in rapid succession," he reported, and "doctors, lawyers, and other 'tender-feet' are coming in by the dozens." A few weeks later, the Santa Fe *Daily New Mexican* reported that Jack had "pulled through" his rough times and "now owns a fine mine in the Black Range."[27]

Even while prospecting, Crawford was seeking other sources of income. In mid-May he was awarded government contracts to supply the military post at Ojo Caliente with forage and fuel. A few weeks later, on June 1, a board of officers at Fort Craig recommended his appointment as post trader, a potentially

lucrative position highly sought after by other frontier entrepreneurs.[28] Although confirmation of his appointment was delayed for several weeks, Crawford must have been corresponding regularly with Maria about moving the family to New Mexico. Sometime later that summer, Maria, Eva, and Harry arrived at San Marcial, a railway station on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe line about five miles north of Fort Craig.

Years later, Eva recalled the happy reunion of the family at San Marcial. Dashing down the steps of the train, ten-year-old Eva threw herself into her father's arms. "Eva! It's my little Eva," Jack cried. "How is my little bronco girl, anyway?" Simply fine, she responded, now that she was with her Papa.[29]

The family traveled by wagon to Fort Craig with a military escort, for Apache activity in the surrounding countryside was sufficient reason for caution—even on the short bumpy road to the post. Crawford established the trader's store temporarily in an unoccupied building within the walled enclosure of the military reservation. In December, however, the commanding officer ordered Jack to vacate this space, "the rooms being required by the Post Quartermaster for store rooms and other purposes."[30]

Shortly thereafter, Crawford moved his trader's store to a building outside the post's east wall. Nearby stood the former Valverde House, which he had purchased prior to Maria's arrival for the family residence. Renaming it "The Scout's Hotel," the Crawfords soon boarded a handful of civilians and officers, with Maria taking charge of domestic arrangements. Eva helped wait upon guests at mealtime, and vegetables from Jack's garden added variety to Maria's menu.[31]

From all accounts, Maria Crawford was a remarkable woman, providing stability for the family when Jack was absent on business and entertainment trips. Not only would she worry about the health and education of her children, but she also took care of practical matters—washing and sewing clothes, caring for the house, and working in the trader's store when needed. She became pregnant soon after reaching Fort Craig, however, and some of these activities necessarily were curtailed as her pregnancy advanced. Dr. John Kane, the highly regarded post surgeon, may have been on hand when Maria gave birth on May 22, 1882, to a baby girl, May Cody Crawford, named in honor of Jack's longtime friend, William F. Cody. Jack and Maria worshipped the child and called her "Little Nugget."[32]

Army children found much to enjoy at frontier military posts, and the Crawford youngsters were no exception. They spent considerable time outdoors in play, and Harry probably joined other boys at the post in playing at soldiering. Both Eva and Harry, under their father's tutelage, became expert marksmen and horseback riders. Like other army children, they would enjoy the excitement of



Figure 13.3
Crawford family quarters in old officers' quarters ca. 1890
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 14511)

military reviews and the constant influx of new people at the post. But the children also discovered a more serious side to military life. Eva later recalled that during Indian scares, women and children at the post were rushed into the fortresslike commissary building for protection.[33]

Despite living on an isolated military post, Jack and Maria arranged for their children's education. Shortly after the family's arrival in New Mexico, Jack met and hired Professor Frederick W. Spencer of Wisconsin to tutor Eva and Harry in exchange for room and board. Spencer, an excellent violinist in addition to being a school teacher, so charmed Jack with his virtuosity that the Poet Scout exclaimed, "You can stay here all your life and all you will have to do will be to play one piece a day." In April 1882 the local press reported that the professor was organizing a "select school for the children of the post" and would also offer lessons on the guitar and violin to interested students.[34]

Before its final deactivation, Fort Craig developed into a lively military community in which the Crawford family assumed a prominent position. In late 1882, at least three officers' wives and their children resided on the post, then garrisoned by eight officers and 139 enlisted men. A Fort Craig baseball club was flourishing, and the post's amateur dramatic company had announced plans to give monthly entertainments. Then, too, Professor Spencer was joined by his

friend Professor A. J. Way of Cleveland, described in the press as "one of the greatest guitar players and soloists in the United States." Way came to New Mexico because of his health, and as soon as he felt well enough he planned to join Spencer and Captain Jack in staging local entertainments.[35]

The post trader's store provided a congenial meeting place for residents of the military community. A surviving daybook from 1882 indicates that most of Jack's sales were for alcoholic beverages, dispensed in separate saloon rooms for officers and enlisted men. Civilians also frequented these rooms, both to drink and to play billiards. Among Jack's most faithful patrons, in fact, were Professor Spencer and Henry Toussaint, a well-known rancher. By military edict, Jack closed the enlisted men's clubroom at 9:00 P.M. (taps), though officers were allowed to keep later hours.[36]

Men and women alike, civilians as well as military personnel, entered Crawford's store to purchase a wide variety of commodities: shirts, shoes, calico, thread, tobacco, matches, paper, envelopes, candles, lamp shades, flour, bacon, coffee, medicine, canned peaches, and so forth. Prospectors from the San Mateo and San Andres mountains also traded with Jack and packed supplies on mules for the return trip to their mining camps. Because Crawford served as the Fort Craig postmaster, residents streamed into his store daily to collect their mail.[37]

Crawford hired local men to help run his various enterprises, including a small dairy he built about two miles from the post to supply the garrison with milk and butter. In filling government hay contracts at Fort Craig and Ojo Caliente, Jack employed from six to twelve men to cut grama grass with mowing machines. One laborer recalled that in putting in hay at Ojo Caliente, the men slept with their carbines, for the hay field was only five miles from an Apache trail.[38]

Jack should have received a nice income from the post tradership, dairy, and government contracts, and undoubtedly profits from these activities helped finance his mining and ranching schemes. But Crawford did not amass great wealth. A newspaper reporter said of Jack in 1885 that although he was "by no means a pauper . . . his generosity will always keep him short of ready cash." The reporter went on to explain: "No ragged miner or worn tramp ever called upon Jack in vain and legions of unprincipled scalawags have taken advantage of this softness of heart to dupe him of his money."[39]

A handful of travelers that Jack befriended during these years left written descriptions of the Crawford household. All agreed that Jack and his family lived "very comfortably" at Fort Craig. Jim Carlin's observations, published in the *Albuquerque Evening Democrat* in 1885, provide a written commentary for the much-published photograph of the Crawford living room that appears in this book.



Figure 13.4
Crawford living room in the old officers' quarters ca. 1885
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 14512)

> Nowhere on the face of the earth is refinement and frontierism brought into more striking contrast than in Jack Crawford's home. In one room the finest pictures, richest carpets, modern furniture and exquisite draperies; in the next rifles, pistols, saddles, and all the paraphernalia of the western horseman. In one room can be heard the sweet notes of the piano and the cultivated voices of happy children practicing the latest songs; in the next the voices of the scout and the writer wrangling over who played low in a spirited game of seven-up. The hum of the sewing machine drifts out through the open window and blends with the lowing of the herd in the corral.[40]

At the time Carlin penned these remarks, New Mexico was undergoing a dynamic transformation, brought about by the arrival of the railroad. The first locomotive steamed into Albuquerque in April 1880 and reached San Marcial in September. With the arrival of the Iron Horse, mining and ranching industries boomed, Anglo emigrants streamed into the territory, and new railroad towns sprang up, including "New" San Marcial, a predominantly Anglo town built a mile from the largely Hispanic village of "Old" San Marcial.

Although New San Marcial's chief industry was railroading, the town also functioned as a supply center for mines in the southern mountains of New Mexico. People commonly believed that fortunes could be made in these mountains. This optimism reached fever intensity during the years Crawford managed the Fort Craig trader's store.

Jack's own passion for mining was unsurpassed. He was firmly convinced that his practical knowledge and willingness to work, coupled with outside development funds, could secure a fortune that was there for the taking. Typical of the miners combing New Mexico's mineral districts, Jack located several promising claims and then attempted to raise capital for further exploration. But unlike many other miners, Jack retained faith in his properties even after initial efforts proved disappointing. For more than thirty years, Jack poured money into his claims, always hoping that eastern financiers would underwrite the cost of large-scale mining.

Jack located most of his mining claims in two areas—the Black Range to the west of Fort Craig and the South Oscura and San Andres mountains to the east. Chloride, the most promising mining camp in the Black Range, became a gathering place for the Crawford clan. Jack's younger brother Austin and sisters Lizzie Nattress and Rebecca James with their families were among the 300 to 500 people who lived in Chloride during the peak years of the 1880s.[41]

Crawford invested most of his money and energy, however, in locating and developing copper and lead claims in the South Oscura and San Andres mountains, located in one of the most isolated regions in New Mexico about forty miles east of San Marcial. Only a few hardy miners ever found their way into these ranges. The Fort Craig–Fort Stanton wagon road cut through this area, but even with this transportation route it never supported a mining community the size of Chloride, for example, and would remain sparsely settled into the twentieth century. Today, these ranges are located within the White Sands Missile Range and are off limits to private citizens.

Crawford had explored this region during the Victorio campaign. In August 1881, according to a contemporary newspaper, Jack located the first mining claims in the San Andres. By the close of the following year, he had filed on at least seventeen locations, attaching the names of his children—Eva, Harry, and May Cody Crawford—to three of the claims.[42] All were located only a few miles southeast of the Trinity Site, where the first atomic bomb was detonated in 1945.

Crawford enjoyed exhibiting his claims to reporters in hopes of generating interest among potential investors. An amusing account of one such visit, appearing in a December 1882 issue of the *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* underscored the uncertainties of travel in this isolated region—even for an experienced scout like Captain Jack. Jack's party of three, including Ed W. Freeman, the *Optic*

correspondent, left Fort Craig on December 18, expecting to reach the foot of the South Oscuras by dark. Here, they planned to spend the night at Crawford's camp, where two men were employed working his claim. Darkness fell, however, before Jack located the camp. Without blankets, provisions, or even water, the three companions hobbled their horses, lit a fire, then tried to sleep. About midnight, the horses struggled free and "started on a bee line for the Rio Grande forty miles away, for water." At daylight, the men struck out on foot, finally locating Jack's camp about 8:00 A.M. "The boys soon had a nice breakfast of coffee, sowbelly and warm bread prepared for us and with ravenous appetites we devoured the meal,". Freeman later reported.[43]

In later months the local press predicted that the San Andres soon would become the major copper district in the territory. Crawford took the lead in scouring the area for promising sites. During a two-year period, 1883–1884, he or his agents located at least forty-one mining claims in the South Oscura and San Andres mountains. Jack also filed on or acquired title to a half-dozen or more mill sites. Thus, by controlling major sources of water in the area (natural springs), he also controlled several miles of fine stock range. Dripping Spring and Grapevine Spring, two of Jack's mill sites, would later figure prominently in his plans to establish a horse ranch.[44]

Maintaining legal title to so many mining properties, however, was expensive. Territorial law required owners to expend $100 annually on each claim; otherwise the property was subject to reclaiming by other parties. In a letter to the *Socorro Bullion,* dated April 10, 1883, Crawford stated that he had spent more than $3,000 in the preceding two years on his claims.[45] He hired local men to perform much of the assessment work, but often he labored in the mines himself. A newspaper correspondent, who stumbled upon one of Jack's camps in the South Oscuras, later wrote of Crawford's industry and generosity. Although the camp was deserted at the time of this visit, Jack had left a note pinned to his tent, which read in part:

> Miners, prospectors and others passing this way will find water in keg. If not good, one and a half miles north on trail is plenty. There is bacon and flour and potatoes in the chest—help yourselves—I have finished assessment work upon 6 claims and have moved to my camp in the San Andres where two men will be at work during the year. . . .
>
> Yours, Capt. Jack Crawford

After helping himself to some of Jack's supplies, the correspondent examined Jack's claims and was suitably impressed by the amount of work accomplished. On the first claim he discovered a tunnel about forty feet long and from six to

eight feet wide. "At least five hundred tons of good ore have been taken . . . piled up on three large dumps or piles outside." Other nearby claims showed similar development. The writer predicted that the region was destined to make men wealthy, and, he concluded, "I know of no one more deserving of success than the 'Poet Scout'."[46]

But it took more money to work these mines than Crawford possessed. Consequently he spent a good deal of his time seeking development funds, both among friends and among optimistic eastern financiers. Jack frequently found investors willing to gamble, but the low-grade ore on his claims coupled with the distance from railroad communications prevented extensive operations.

During the years Crawford was locating his mining properties, he also established at least two ranches. On September 20, 1882, he preempted 160 acres in Nogal Canyon, about 16 miles southwest of Fort Craig, where he ran a small herd of cattle. Although information about the "No-Gal Ranch" is sparse, we do know that Jack received a patent for this land in 1890.[47] Crawford also kept a mixture of horses, cows, and beef cattle on property adjacent to his Fort Craig residence. In 1885, after the military had abandoned the Fort Craig reservation, Crawford filed on this land as a soldier's homestead and maintained ownership until after the turn of the century.[48]

Crawford's financial enterprises—mines, ranches, government contracts, the trader's store—left little time to perform on the stage. On occasion, however, he recited poetry at public gatherings, and he also was active in the Grand Army of the Republic. The theater was in Crawford's blood, however, and by the time troops were withdrawn from Fort Craig in the fall of 1884, Jack was making plans to return to the stage.

The following February Crawford embarked upon a lecture tour through New Mexico with Will L. Visscher, actor, poet, comic lecturer, and journalist. A Las Cruces reporter who witnessed their performance avowed that Jack's recitations and songs of his own composition had "won unlimited and well deserved applause," while Visscher's flashing wit and droll humor had captivated the audience.[49]

After playing in New Mexico, the Visscher-Crawford combination toured Kansas and then landed in St. Louis, Missouri, about the time that Dr. William F. Carver arrived there with his Wild West show. Carver, a dentist by trade, had organized with "Buffalo Bill" Cody the first Wild West exhibition, staged in Omaha in May 1883. After one season the partners separated, with Cody and Carver each touring with his own Wild West company.[50]

For unknown reasons, Visscher and Crawford ended their partnership in St. Louis, and Jack teamed up with Carver. More than 30,000 people thronged the St. Louis fairgrounds on opening day, May 3, 1885, to witness Doc Carver and

Captain Jack perform in the outdoor extravaganza, featuring pony races, bronco riding, Indian war dances, a buffalo hunt, an Indian attack on a stagecoach, and a reenactment of the pony express.[51] Later that summer in New England, Carver's company tangled with Cody's, each suing the other for libel and each claiming to be the original Wild West exhibition. Eventually the two parties settled out of court, but in the meantime Carver's company was forced to disband.[52]

Characteristically Crawford rebounded from the company's demise with drive and determination. After parting with Carver in New England, Jack arranged with the New York firm of Funk and Wagnalls to republish *The Poet Scout,* and he interested a New York millionaire grocer in his copper mines. In September Crawford returned to New Mexico in high spirits.[53]

Still, financial problems constantly plagued the Poet Scout. With departure of the troops from Fort Craig, Crawford had lost a dependable source of income, although he would receive a small stipend from the Interior Department for serving as custodian of the Fort Craig reservation.[54] In fact, the Crawford family continued residing at the abandoned military post for several more years. Much of the daily management of Crawford's property, however, must have fallen into Maria's hands. After Jack's death, Maria remarked on Jack's roving disposition in her application for a widow's pension: "He would absent himself for long periods, and then would come home for a while and then go off again."[55] These absences placed enormous strains on the marriage, and late in life Jack and Maria would separate.

Within three months of his return to New Mexico after leaving Carver, Crawford boarded a train for New York City, where he would oversee the publication of his book and embark upon a career as a public lecturer. Early in 1886 in Brooklyn, Crawford gave his first two-hour entertainment, which he entitled "The Campfire and the Trail," later insisting it was not a lecture but "a frontier monologue and medley." For two hours Crawford regaled his audience with stories of his western adventures and songs and poems of his own composition. Dressed in buckskin, a wide-brimmed sombrero covering his flowing locks, a six-shooter at his waist, and a rifle in hand, Crawford was a living example of the western hero.[56]

Jack's new found literary and platform success did little to soften the impact of the shocking news that arrived on April 4, 1886—little May had died of scarlet fever. Jack's grief was profound; yet thousands of miles from home, he submerged his grief in practical matters, honoring his platform engagements and working for the financial security of his family.[57] Jack's poignant poem written on the sad occasion of his daughter's death, entitled "Our Lost Nugget," was published in a New York newspaper. A stanza follows:

God help me, and God help her mother,
Her grief must be crushing indeed,
And God help her sister and brother,
Since hearts that so loved her must bleed.
And mine reaches out o'er the prairie
In a sad and a solemn refrain,
When I think I shall never behold her,
And ne'er kiss her sweet lips again.[58]

Jack returned to New Mexico in 1886 and would remain home about a year before again departing on an extended trip to the east. In July Maria gave birth to the Crawford's fourth child, May, later christened Elizabeth Esther May Crawford. During the summer and fall, Jack worked with renewed vigor on his Oscura and San Andres claims. With the start of the New Year, however, he toured the territory with "The Campfire and the Trail."[59] By this time Crawford's name had become a household word throughout New Mexico.



Figure 13.5 1. Capt. Jack Crawford, "The Poet Scout"; 2. Eva Crawford, Jack's daughter; 3. Mrs. Jack Crawford; 4. May Crawford, Jack's daughter. (Museum of New Mexico neg# 50357)

In the spring of 1887 Crawford left New Mexico for the East Coast, where he would star in the play, *On the Trail; or, Daniel Boone the Avenger,* and the following year he opened in his own play, *Fonda; or, The Trapper's Dream.* During Benjamin Harrison's bid for the presidency, Crawford wrote campaign poetry and gave more than fifty speeches in New York City for the Republican party.[60] Crawford's loyalty was rewarded. In October 1889 the Harrison administration appointed Jack as a special agent in the Department of Justice.

Before accepting this appointment, Crawford served as a director of the New Era Exposition staged in St. Joseph, Missouri, during September and October. Billed as the greatest exhibition of farm produce ever given in the United States, the exposition covered more than forty acres and offered prizes for the best agricultural displays. In addition, Captain Jack staged Wild West exhibitions, employing fifty Apache Indians from the San Carlos reservation in Arizona to reenact scenes of Indian warfare. The village the Indians constructed on the southeast corner of the exposition grounds became one of the major attractions of the month-long exposition.[61]

Crawford spent the next four years (1889–1893) working for the Department of Justice. During these years he visited most western states and territories, investigating violations of United States laws prohibiting the sale of liquor to Indians. He often rode deep into Indian reservations to obtain testimony, and on one occasion he shaved his beard and disguised himself as an Indian to catch a liquor dealer.[62] In many towns he visited, he staged entertainments and delighted local audiences with his two-hour medley of song, story, and poetry.

After resigning his position with the Justice Department, Crawford spent the next five years touring the U.S. with "The Campfire and the Trail," sometimes speaking before audiences that numbered a thousand or more. On occasion he gave three performances in a single day before boarding a train for his next day's engagement.[64]

Despite his platform success, Crawford struggled financially to maintain his mining and ranching properties in New Mexico. Consequently in 1898 at the age of fifty-one, Crawford joined the gold rush to the Klondike in the Canadian Northwest to seek his fortune. He spent two years battling the elements in this frozen land, first as assistant general manager of the Klondike, Yukon, and Copper River Company, and then, after breaking with the company because of its fraudulent claims to stockholders, as owner of "Capt. Jack's Wigwam," a trading post that catered to miners.[64]

Among Crawford's greatest strengths was his ability to rebound quickly from setbacks. Although he failed to find gold in the Yukon, the desire for fame and fortune still burned inside. Shortly after leaving the gold fields in 1900, he

opened with a new play in San Francisco.[65] He then rejoined the lecture circuit, and for the next decade he criss-crossed the country staging entertainments. In the last years of his life, he developed a passion for helping wayward youths, frequently entertaining at reform schools and also organizing a boys' club, which he called Boy Heroes of the World, one of several youth organizations to appear in the United States during the Progressive Era.[66] He purchased property in Michigan in hopes of turning it into a boys' camp but lacked the finances to carry out the project.

Despite setbacks and disappointments, Crawford moved through life with an optimism that would not be vanquished. His poetry reflected his sunny disposition, which in part accounted for its popularity. The gentle humor and optimism found in "A Sunshine Boomerang," for example, struck a popular cord.

When a bit of sunshine hits ye,
    After passing of a cloud,
When a bit of laughter gits ye
    An' yer spine is feelin' proud,
Don't forgit to up and fling it
    At a soul that's feelin' blue,
For the minit that ye sling it
    It's a boomerang to you.[67]

The same humor and optimism characterized his platform appearances. A writer paying tribute to the Poet Scout upon his death wrote, "Captain Crawford was one of the most unique and delightful entertainers of his time . . . His entertainments possess a charm that won his audiences, whether he addressed a hall full of boys, or the leading spirits at the nation's capital."[68]

Crawford, the entertainer, however, was a man of action who had participated in the closing of the American frontier. He captured the imagination of eastern audiences because he embodied qualities they come to expect of a western hero. Honest, brave, rugged, and self-reliant, Crawford had fought Indians, captured lawbreakers, prospected for gold, and wrangled horses during a supposedly simpler age that easterners came to regard with longing and nostalgia. On the stage, Crawford used his western experiences, including his stint as post trader at Fort Craig, to educate audiences about their frontier heritage. Above all else, then, Crawford should be remembered as one of the important image-makers of his day, for he helped thousands of middle-class Americans formulate their ideas about the American West. •

Notes

1. Undated, untitled newspaper clipping reporting death of Capt. Jack Crawford, in scrapbook in possession of Harriett Richardson (Crawford's great granddaughter), Socorro, New Mexico.
2. John W. Crawford, *The Poet Scout: Verses and Songs* (San Francisco: H. Keller, 1879), p. xi. For biographical sketches, see John W. Crawford, *The Poet Scout: A Book of Song and Story* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1886), pp. x–xi; *Dictionary of American Biography,* vol. 4 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), pp. 522–523; *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography,* vol. 8 (New York: James T. White, 1924), pp. 175–176).
3. Hugh J. Mohan, "Life of Capt. J. Crawford," on file in John W. Crawford Papers, Western History Department, Denver Public Library; *Schuylkill County in the Civil War,* Historical Society of Schuylkill County, vol. 7 (No. 3, 1961), pp. 35–36, 81.
4. Mohan, "Life of Capt. J. Crawford."
5. Crawford, *The Poet Scout* (1886), p. xi; John Crawford, Compiled Military Service Records, Civil War, Pennsylvania Volunteers, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter RG, NA). The biographical sketch that appears in *The Poet Scout* (1886), p. xi, states that Jack enlisted just before his sixteenth birthday. This is in error.
6. Date of Susie Crawford's death supplied by Harriett Richardson from family records. For Jack's account of his promise to his dying mother, see Crawford to Wells, 25 October 1894, John W. Crawford Papers, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University (hereafter RGHC).
7. John W. Crawford, Pension Application Files, Civil War Series, Records of the Veterans Administration, RG 15, NA; *Miners' Journal* (Pottsville, Pennsylvania), 17 and 24 April 1869; dates of children's births supplied by Harriett Richardson from family records. Anna Maria Stokes was known both before and after her marriage as Maria.
8. *Miners' Journal,* 17 June 1871; Crawford, *The Poet Scout* (1879), p. xiv.
9. See Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars, The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 244–245.
10. See Hartranft letter (dated 8 May 1875) in the first edition of *The Poet Scout* (1879); *Black Range* (Chloride, New Mexico), 16 January 1885; John W. Crawford, untitled, unfinished manuscript pertaining to experiences in the Black Hills, courtesy of Harriett Richardson.
11. See *Omaha Daily Bee,* 13 May 1876.
12. See, for example, *Omaha Daily Bee,* 7 March 1876.
13. *Omaha Daily Bee,* 23 February–9 May 1876; undated, unidentified newspaper clipping in John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC.
14. Crawford, *The Poet Scout* (1879), pp. xiv, 24–36.
15. Jerome A. Greene, *Slim Buttes, 1876, An Episode of the Great Sioux War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), pp. 33–42.
16. See extract from the *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 8 December 1895, in Scrapbook No. 2, John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC; *New York Herald,* 17 September 1876; *Omaha Daily Bee,* 22 September 1876; *Evening Wisconsin* (Milwaukee), 2

February 1891 (copy in John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC).

17. For example of Buffalo Bill Combination advertisement, see *Wheeling Daily Register* (West Virginia), 7 March 1877.
18. Crawford's travels during this time can be documented in California, Nevada, and British Columbia newspapers.
19. Undated and untitled manuscript written sometime after 1908, courtesy of Harriett Richardson; undated letter from Alfred Dampier to Crawford, Box 2, and letter from Dampier to Crawford, 24 January 1880, Box 6, Correspondence, John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC; *Weekly New Mexican* (Santa Fe), 31 May 1880.
20. Valois to Stedman, 16 June 1880, transmitting list of citizen employees at Fort Craig, RG 92, NA, copy courtesy of Harriett Richardson.
21. Crawford's involvement in Victorio's War is gleaned from official military communications and also from a typescript of a diary Jack kept that covers the final three months of the campaign. He later wrote an essay entitled "Pursuit of Victorio," *Socorro County Historical Society* 1 (February 1965), pp. 1–8.
22. Crawford apparently used Buell's letter of commendation in an advertisement for the second edition of *The Poet Scout,* published in 1886. The date on this letter 12 September 1880, however, has been misprinted. Copy of the published letter is in the author's possession.
23. *Daily New Mexican* (Santa Fe), 30 November 1880.
24. *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 18 November 1880; Crawford to Lute, 28 February 1881, John W. Crawford Papers, Western History Department, Denver Public Library; clipping from *Boston Globe,* 19 December 1897, in Scrapbook No. 8, John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC.
25. *Daily New Mexican,* 6 February 1881; *Boston Globe,* 19 December 1897, RGHC. The Santa Fe press erroneously reported that Jack's party was attacked on January 30. See letter dated 6 February 1881, Register of Letters Received, District of New Mexico, RG 393, NA, M-1097, roll 7.
26. *Daily New Mexican,* 2 February 1881; Crawford to Lute, 28 February 1881, John W. Crawford Papers, Western History Department, Denver Public Library; *Boston Globe,* 19 December 1897, John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC.
27. *Military Review* (Santa Fe), 1 May 1881, copy in John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC; *Daily New Mexican,* 17 May 1881.
28. Contracts are in Register of Contracts, Office of Quartermaster General, RG 92, NA; letter of commanding officer, Fort Craig, 5 June [1881], Register of Letters Received, District of New Mexico, RG 393, NA, M-1097, roll 7.
29. Thereon Marcos Trumbo, "Bronco Girl of Old Fort Craig," *New Mexico Magazine* 25 (January 1947), pp. 17, 49.
30. Post adjutant to Crawford, 5 December 1881, Letters Sent, Fort Craig, Post Records, RG 393, NA.
31. Post adjutant to Jenkins, 23 October 1882; post adjutant to post trader, 12 August 1883, Letters Sent, Fort Craig, Post Records, RG 393, NA; Post Trader's Daybook (1882), courtesy of Harriett Richardson; diagram of Fort Craig drawn by May Crawford Brechtel, Jack Crawford's daughter, courtesy of Harriett Richardson; *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 3 October 1882.

32. Date of May Cody Crawford's birth supplied by Harriett Richardson. For Maria working in the store, see John W. Crawford, Pension Application Files, Civil War Series, RG 15, NA.
33. For children on frontier military posts, see Patricia Y. Stallard, *Glitterying Misery, Dependents of the Indian Fighting Army* (Fort Collins, Colorado: Old Army Press, 1978), pp. 75–101. See also Trumbo, "Broncho Girl of Old Fort Craig," p. 50.
34. *Janesville Recorder* (Wisconsin), 27 January 1894, clipping in scrapbook in possession of Harriett Richardson; *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 13 April 1882.
35. *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 13 April, 2 November, 11 and 12 December 1882.
36. 1882 Daybook, courtesy of Harriett Richardson; Dodge to Crawford, 4 October 1883, Letters Sent, Fort Craig, Post Records, RG 393, NA. Crawford had special tokens coined for his saloons. On one side was stamped "Capt. Jack Crawford's Club Room," and the other side, "Good For 1 Drink." Copy furnished by Marion Grinstead.
37. *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 13 April and 12 December 1882.
38. 1882 Daybook, courtesy of Harriett Richardson; Dyer to Crawford, 5 February 1882, Dodge to Crawford, 20 July 1883, Letters Sent, Fort Craig, Post Records, RG 393, NA; Crawford to Marshall, 31 October 1882, Letters Received, Chief Quartermaster, District of New Mexico, RG 393, NA; *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 3 October 1882; Register of Contacts, Office of Quartermaster General, RG 92, NA.
39. *Black Range,* 16 January 1885.
40. *Albuquerque Evening Democrat,* 21 November 1885; see also *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 3 October and 12 December 1882.
41. A variety of newspaper stories testify to the presence of the Crawford family in Chloride. For population figures, see Philip Varney, *New Mexico's Best Ghost Towns, A Practical Guide* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), p. 102.
42. *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 21 December 1882; see entries for Jack Crawford in Record Books I, VI, J, Socorro County Courthouse.
43. *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 16 and 21 December 1882.
44. *Socorro Bullion,* 1 August 1883; see entries for Jack Crawford in Record Books G, IX, XVII, Socorro County Courthouse.
45. *New Mexican Review* (Santa Fe), 26 December 1883; *Socorro Bullion,* 1 May 1883.
46. *Socorro Bullion,* 1 December 1884.
47. See copy of preemption claim dated 31 October 1882 in possession of Harriett Richardson. Patent for the claim was filed 5 June 1890. See Record Book XXX, Socorro County Courthouse, p. 526.
48. See letter to Crawford, August 4, 1883, Letters Sent, Fort Craig, Post Records, RG 393, NA; Record Book IX, Socorro County Courthouse, p. 682.
49. *Rio Grande Republican* (Las Cruces, New Mexico), 7 March 1885.
50. Visscher to Crawford, 12 February 1885, in John W. Crawford Papers, Western History Department, Denver Public Library; *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 27 April 1885; *Missouri Republican* (St. Louis), 3 May 1885; Don Russell, *The Wild*

West, or, A History of the Wild West Shows (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1970), pp. 8–12.

51. *Missouri Republican,* 1 and 4 May 1885.
52. Untitled, undated newspaper article from New Haven, in scrapbook in possession of Harriett Richardson; Russell, *The Wild West,* p. 24.
53. *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 18–19 August, 4 September 1885; *Socorro Bullion,* 3 October 1885.
54. *Daily New Mexican,* 21 June 1886.
55. John W. Crawford, Pension Application Files, Civil War Series, RG 15, NA.
56. *Daily New Mexican,* 21 June 1886; see program for "The Camp Fire and the Trail," 15 April 1886, Programs Collection, Box 1, Arizona Historical Society (copy furnished by Lewis O. Saum); untitled newspaper clipping, 26 May 1886, John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC.
57. Carlin to Mrs. Crawford, 5 April 1886, copy courtesy of Harriett Richardson; undated, untitled newspaper clipping announcing death of "Little Nugget," John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC.
58. From newspaper clipping containing Crawford's poem and letter, dated 6 April 1886, in scrapbook in possession of Harriett Richardson.
59. Information concerning May Crawford provided by her daughter, Evelyn Lewis. *Socorro Bullion,* 3 and 31 July and 7 August 1886, 26 March and 9 April 1887; *Las Vegas Daily Optic,* 10 and 24 February and 16 March 1887; *Albuquerque Morning Democrat,* 11 May 1887.
60. *Socorro Bullion,* 5 March and 15 October 1887; untitled, undated newspaper clipping saying that Crawford opened at Keyport, New Jersey, 17 August 1888, with "Fonda," John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC; *San Marcial Reporter,* 3 November 1888; Crawford to Governor, 21 May 1889, Territorial Archives of New Mexico, roll 103.
61. *St. Joseph Herald,* 1 July 1889, clipping in John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC; *Black Range,* 6 September 1889; *St. Joseph Daily News,* 2 September–7 October 1889.
62. *San Marcial Reporter,* 7 November 1891.
63. See publicity brochure for "The Camp Fire and the Trail" [June 1895], Huntington Library, copy provided by Lewis O. Saum; *Davenport Republican,* 20 March 1896, in Scrapbook No. 4, John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC.
64. *Seattle Times,* 31 March 1898; clipping from a San Francisco newspaper dated 17 April 1899, and an untitled clipping dated 17 January 1900, copies courtesy of Harriett Richardson.
65. See undated and untitled newspaper clippings reviewing Crawford's new play and tickets for play, September 1900, John W. Crawford Papers, RGHC.
66. On Boy Heroes, see *The Spark Plug,* August 1913, copy in possession of Harriett Richardson. This journal for boys was published monthly at Lancaster, Ohio.
67. John W. Crawford, *"Whar' The Hand O' God is Seen" and Other Poems,* second edition (New York: New York Lyceum Publishing Co., 1913), p. 29.
68. Undated, untitled newspaper clipping reporting death of Captain Jack Crawford, in scrapbook in possession of Harriett Richardson.



Figure 14.1
Fort Craig in the late 1950s.
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 112220)

CHAPTER 14

Peggy A. Gerow

Archaeological Research and the Fort Craig Field School



Scholarly interest in Fort Craig spans several decades. Only within the past twenty years, however, have the majority of efforts to record and document the history of the fort and its surrounding area occurred. Most of this documentation is housed at the Laboratory of Anthropology under the file LA 1091.

Previous Work

H. W. Yeo made the first known recording of the area in 1932 as part of his survey of the archaeology of Socorro County. His identification of prehistoric and a few historical sherds indicates the fort may be built on the site of a prehistoric pueblo. In his notebook on Socorro County, he states:

> Practically all the shards were found between the ruins of the old fort and the perpendicular bluff on the west edge of the valley. This area was a part of the dumping grounds of the fort. Some shards were found in adobe heaps that had formerly been adobe bricks which had been used in the construction of the fort. The bricks may have been made from surface clay where shards were dumped or from the clay from decomposed adobe bricks in the village site.
>
> The site was examined twice. The shards have been identified as follows: San Marcial Black-on-white; El Paso Brown; Red-on-buff, red exterior; Plain red to brown ware; Polished-red; Little Colorado type, unclassified red; Incised terracotta.
>
> The shards which were collected do not truly represent the pottery of the site as several hundreds of people lived in the fort for several years and many of the shards must have been picked up by the curious and removed.[1]

Photographs taken of the buildings within the fort at this time do show standing walls for the majority of structures. None of the buildings have roofs, which

means it was only a matter of time before erosional processes took their toll. All of these photographs are on file at the Laboratory of Anthropology.

The next work within the area occurred in 1958, twenty-six years after Yeo's survey, and was the first to focus on Fort Craig. Robert Utley conducted a survey of the fort for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings and noted "the walls of some 18 adobe buildings are still visible in varying stages of disintegration. One structure, on the southwest corner of the quadrangle, and a set of buildings on the northeast corner have walls ten to fifteen feet high yet standing. The volcanic rock walls of the jail house have not collapsed, but are being gradually dismantled by visitors"[2] (Figure 14.1). Apparently Utley was referring to the commanding officer's house and the hospital.

In 1965 the Museum of New Mexico, as part of its Historic Sites Inventory, conducted four separate record searches to collect information on Fort Craig. The resulting data, extracted from both primary and secondary sources, provide a good base for the documentation of the history of the fort.

A year later, John Wilson documented the condition of the fort and made a small surface collection within the trash scatter along its eastern side.[3] Most of the buildings were mounds of adobe, although wall outlines could still be discerned. The hospital, though, still had standing walls up to 3 m high. In 1970, Wilson returned to the fort for further documentation and made another small surface collection from one of the trash areas.

In 1969, Lee Myers prepared a nomination form for the State Register of Cultural Properties. The following year, the State Planning Office nominated the Fort Craig site to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination encompassed only 15 acres, which did not include the entire fort area or the cemetery.

Thirteen years later, in 1982, Mike Marshall, with support from the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, conducted the Rio Abajo survey. This survey covered the area from Fra Cristobal north to the southern boundary of the Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge. The majority of sites recorded were from the Pueblo period or earlier and no emphasis was placed on the later historic sites such as Fort Craig, although both Forts Conrad and Craig and the outlying historic settlements receive several paragraphs of mention.[4] A prehistoric site, however, was documented by Marshall just south of the cemetery.

Limited stabilization work was undertaken on five of the fort's buildings in 1984 by Rio Abajo Archaeological Services as part of the Bureau of Land Management's interim stabilization plan.[5] The walls of the commanding officer's quarters, the masonry guardhouse, and the most eroded portions of the three adobe casements were repaired. The limited excavations along the inside of the casement walls conducted at this time represent the first professional excavations

carried out at the fort. Although no excavations were done in the commanding officer's quarters, vandals' holes revealed the presence of a prehistoric component underneath. This further supports Yeo's contention that Fort Craig was built on an abandoned prehistoric village.

Finally, in September of 1988, the University of New Mexico's Office of Contract Archeology conducted a cultural resources inventory of the Fort Craig Special Management Area (SMA) and completed Historic Building Inventory Forms documenting the present structural conditions of the fort's buildings.[6] The survey of the plains surrounding the fort recorded ten distinct areas of dumping episodes, the area of the blacksmith shop, and a prehistoric component. This work effort formed the basis for the placement of the replica of the Civil War flagpole, the proposed location of the walking trail into the fort, and the proposed location of the parking lot.

The Fort Craig Field School

In the fall of 1989, the Archaeological and Historical Research Institute (AHRI) entered into negotiations with the Bureau of Land Management for the establishment of a five-year field school at Fort Craig to begin in June of 1990. This project was designed to serve a number of purposes: *(a)* to operate an archaeological field school for the training of students and the interested public; *(b)* to assess the nature and extent of cultural resources at the site and to serve as a guide for any future research that may be undertaken; and *(c)* to establish a foundation for the BLM's public interpretation program at the site.

In addition, the research at Fort Craig was structured so that comparisons could be made with the results of archaeological excavations at Fort Fillmore and Fort Cummings. The three decades of occupation of Fort Craig roughly encompassed the occupation of these forts. Fort Fillmore was manned from 1851 to 1862 and Fort Cummings from 1863 to 1885. All three were designed to serve a similar function, and comparative study should result in a broader understanding of southwestern frontier history. Thus the Fort Craig research design was modeled after those of Fort Fillmore and Fort Cummings.[7] It was centered around six research topics—the economic status of personnel, reliance on the local economy, effectiveness of the Army's shipping of goods, role of the railroad, environmental adaptation, and the impact of vandalism on the present condition of the site.

The five seasons of fieldwork were conducted during the summer and fall from 1990 to 1994. More than 100 volunteers participated in the archaeological investigations during the course of the five sessions. These participants were trained in such techniques as surface collection, mapping, excavation, and in-field artifact cataloging.

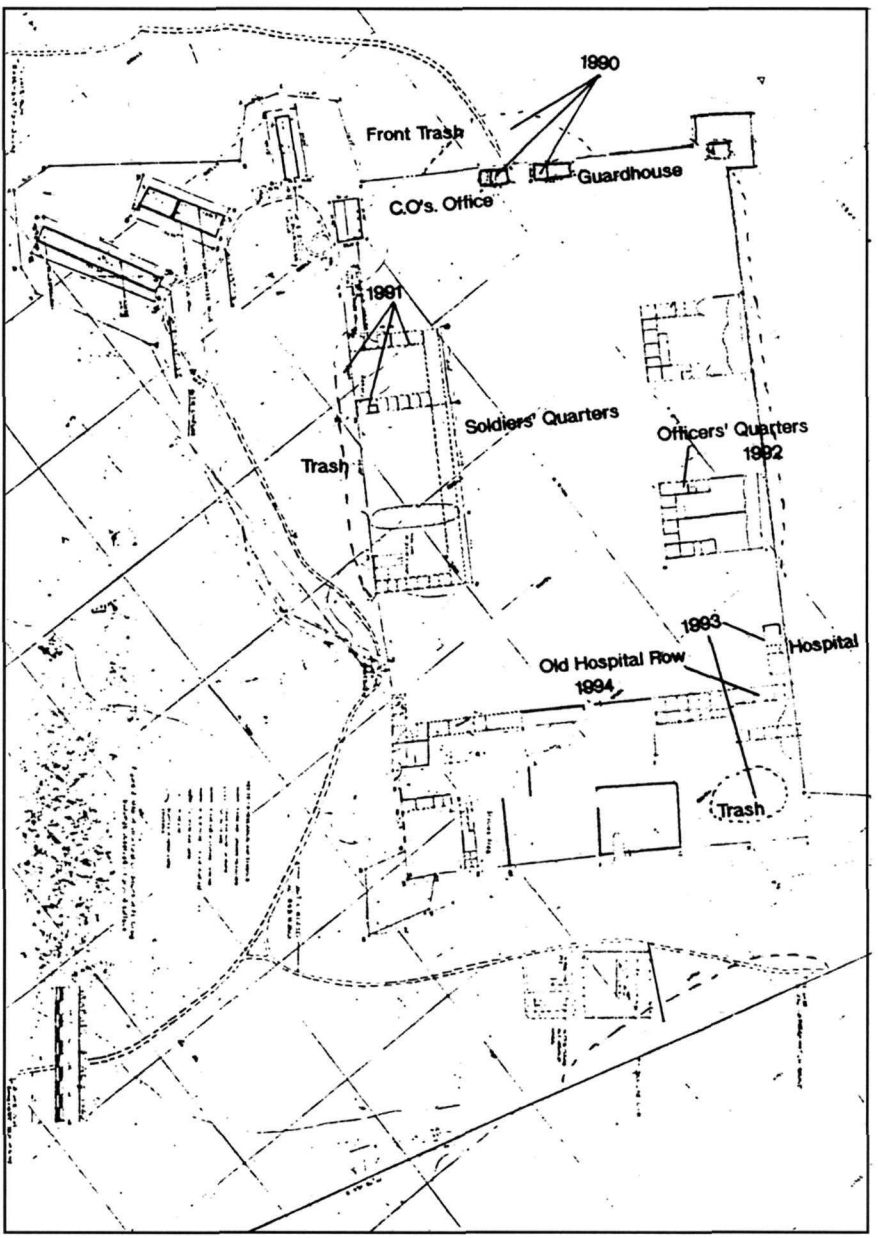


Figure 14.2 Location of data recovery areas.

The work effort for the five seasons concentrated on areas around the front gate that were to be impacted by the walking trail (1990), several rooms within the western set of enlisted men's quarters (1991), an ell in the eastern set of officers' quarters (1992), the "new" hospital (1993), and several rooms within the old hospital row (1994) (Figure 14.2). In addition to work within the various rooms, a trash dump behind the enlisted men's quarters and one to the east of the old hospital were also investigated.

The first session of the field school concentrated on areas around the front gate. These included the trash scatter in front of the fort and the structural remnants on either side of the trail through the front gate. These structures initially functioned as the guardhouse and prison rooms. Later the building on the south side served as offices for the commanding officer, post adjutant, quartermaster, and subsistence officer.

Excavations in front of the fort indicated that the trash scatter was the result of post-abandonment dumping episodes. The excavations also showed that the original ground surface was up to 30 cm below modern ground level.

Within the area inside the front gate, the exterior wall of the south guardhouse was found as well as remnants of the floor surface, which consisted of packed dirt (Figure 14.3). Supposedly this building had a wooden floor added at some point, but no evidence of this floor remained. Very few artifacts came from the excavations within this building.



Figure 14.3 Adobe bricks in wall fall strata of the south guardhouse.



Figure 14.4 Excavation in the 1 by 1 m grids on the north side of the trail.

On the north side of the trail a line of 1 by 1 m units was positioned to intersect the walls of the two adobe rooms abutting the basalt guardhouse (Figure 14.4). Surprisingly, no wall remnants were found. The lack of structural remains raises questions concerning the size and nature of the front gate. Unfortunately, documentary evidence regarding the front gate also is lacking. The only known description of the sallyport was made in 1918 by a former post surgeon who wrote that it was wide enough for wagons to pass through and was closed by heavy gates at night.[8]

The artifacts recovered included fragments of glass bottles, window glass, brass buttons, bullets, animal bone, culinary items, miscellaneous metal fragments, and fragments of milled lumber. In addition, the lower portion of a square-toed boot was found in situ just inside the front gate. Those artifacts recovered from the investigations outside the front gate proved to be of questionable provenience, although temporally diagnostic attributes on some of the artifacts indicated that the majority were probably related to the military occupation of the fort. The artifacts recovered during the first season enabled us to begin to address at least three of the six research topics—the role of the railroad, environmental adaptation, and the impact of vandalism.

The 1991 season focused on four rooms within the western soldiers' quarters—the last two rooms in the southwestern row, the western-most squad

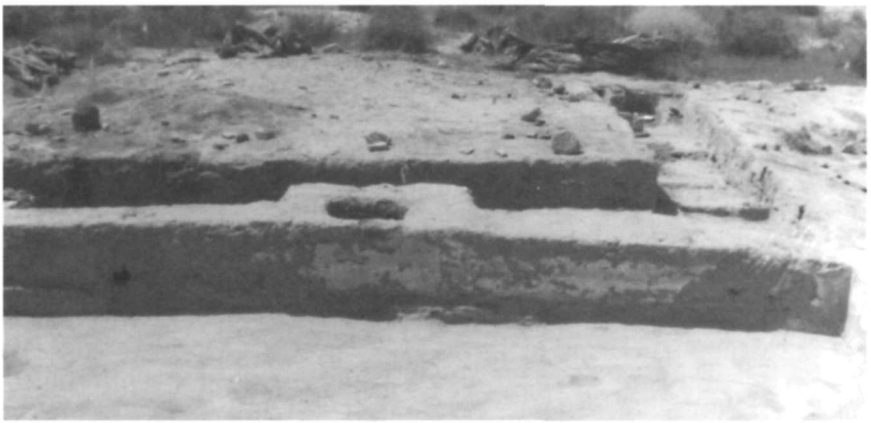


Figure 14.5 Completely excavated room in soldiers' quarters.

room, and the bakery. A 50 cm wide trench was also excavated in the room abutting the north side of the bakery and a 1 by 2 m trench was excavated within the trash scatter behind the quarters.

The soldiers' quarters were built in a U configuration. Two squad rooms or dormitories were across the front with kitchens, mess rooms, storerooms, and laundresses' quarters located in the ell rooms. These two ells encompassed a small placita, which in times of emergency such as during the Civil War had picket post rooms constructed within it. A porch spanned the entire front of the enlisted men's quarters.

Only one room, the next to last room, was completely excavated (Figure 14.5). Based upon the artifacts recovered, this room appears to have functioned as a mess room. Excavations in the other rooms focused on exposing the walls and any internal features such as fireplaces.

The final room investigated, the bakery, is located in the southeastern-most room of the western soldiers' quarters. Limited excavations exposed the cobble oven foundation and two smaller rooms, which archaeological evidence suggests were not built simultaneously and underwent repeated remodeling. These rooms may have functioned as a storeroom and a work room. The oven was built of bricks and was constructed in the early 1880s as a replacement for an inadequate adobe oven (Figure 14.6).

In addressing the research questions, the material remains indicated that the soldiers had few commodities and supplemented their rations with fish, duck, and turtle. The majority of bottle glass and ceramics recovered postdate 1880, indicating the railroad had a direct impact on the economy of the fort. Much of the wood used in the floors and ceilings came from within a twenty-five mile



Figure 14.6 Bricks from the oven in the bakery.



Figure 14.7 Excavation in Room 3 of the officers' quarters.

radius of the fort, and the coal used in the stoves was obtained from mines located about 30 miles to the northeast. Very little reuse was evident on the artifacts, suggesting that the shipment of supplies to the fort was fairly regular, barring floods and attacks on the supply trains.

The work effort for the 1992 season focused on the five rooms within the western ell of the eastern set of officers' quarters. Three of the rooms were completely excavated and at least a third of the other two were investigated (Figure 14.7). In addition, a 1 m wide trench was opened in the adjacent eastern room along the front of the quarters.

Located on the north side of the parade ground and opposite the soldiers' quarters, the officers' quarters were also built in a U with each ell bordering an inside placita. A covered porch spanned the entire front of the building. These quarters housed both married officers and their families as well as unmarried officers. Married officers presumably lived within the rooms in the ell and the single officers had a large room in the front.

An 1870 report described the quarters as consisting of a 20 by 15 by 12½ foot central hallway flanked on either side by a 20 by 20 by 12½ foot bedroom. Adjoining one of these bedrooms was a dining room of the same size, which connected to another 20 by 15 by 12½ foot hallway with a servants' room and a 20 by 20 by 12½ foot kitchen.[9] A small room in the northeastern corner of the eastern ell was used for ordnance storage.

The data collected during these investigations enabled us to begin to make comparisons between the officers and the enlisted men. The artifacts recovered from the officers' quarters support the hypothesis that officers were of a higher economic status than the enlisted men. While limited in number, wine and champagne bottles were more common in the officers' quarters than in the enlisted men's quarters. Other differences were evident in the larger quantity of tin cans, the greater amount of semiporcelain ceramics, and the higher percentage of personal items, all of which indicate higher economic status for the officers.

Economic differences also were evident in the faunal assemblage. The officers received better cuts of meat, as well as a greater variety of wild animals as a dietary supplement.

Architecturally, the differences were harder to discern because of the erosion of over 10 feet of wall in both sets of quarters. Given what remains, however, some differences were obvious. First and foremost is the size of the rooms, the officers having larger rooms for themselves and their families. Second, some of the doorways within the officers' quarters appear to have been designed to support a more elaborate framing element than those used in the enlisted men's quarters (Figure 14.8).



Figure 14.8 Doorway and part of wall in Room 1 of the officers' quarters.



Figure(s) 14.9 Excavation in the wards of the new hospital.



The fourth season of the field school concentrated on the two wards and hallway of the "new" post hospital. A 1 m wide trench was also excavated on the eastern exterior of the building to explore the connection between the old and new hospitals, and several units were excavated outside the north and south walls to assess the doorways. Because of the potential for disturbance by the increase in visitors to the fort, a 10 by 10 m surface collection unit was positioned over a trash concentration behind the old hospital and several square meters were excavated to sterile in a second concentration to the north of the surface collection. Because of time constraints only the hallway was completely excavated; in the wards only the walls and the fireplaces were exposed (Figure 14.9).

The decision to excavate in the new hospital was based upon several reasons. First, the new hospital was one of the last buildings constructed at the fort, and we wanted to see if there were any architectural changes between earlier construction methods and this later construction episode. Second, this building contained the only room specifically designated for use by the buffalo soldiers, and we were hoping to obtain archaeological evidence regarding the status of this group of soldiers. Finally, the hospital was one of the last adobe buildings to have standing walls as late as 1970. Since that time, the rate of deterioration has been so rapid, down to the foundation in some areas, that we wanted to salvage whatever information remained before it was lost forever.

Unlike at the other buildings examined during the first three seasons, the excavations within the hospital revealed that the entire building was built upon a basalt foundation consisting of footings and stem walls. The footings were constructed of one or two courses of irregular basalt cobbles set within a probable hand-dug trench. Footings were present under all the exterior walls and the two interior walls of the hallway. The walls were constructed of a double-wide row of adobe bricks measuring 26 inches thick rather than the 19-inch-thick walls found in the south guardhouse and the soldiers' and officers' quarters.

Were there differences between the status of the black and the white soldiers? Archaeologically we could address this new research issue by comparing architectural features found in the black ward with those found in the white ward, and by comparing the quality and types of artifacts recovered from the two wards.

Architecturally there appeared to be no differences between the two wards. Each ward was equal in size and mirrored the other in layout. Likewise, the artifacts recovered showed no economic differences between the two groups, but instead, reflected the economic differences between the enlisted men and the officers.

The final season of work, conducted in the fall of 1994, centered on rooms within the old hospital and a later set of officers' quarters constructed on the



Figure 14.10 Excavation in the old hospital.



Figure 14.11 Rooms 1 and 2 of the old hospital after excavation.

southern end of the hospital row in 1868. At one point laundresses and other civilian employees were housed in this row, so we were hoping to be able to address the research question concerning the economic status of these individuals. After the completion of the new hospital, the various rooms within this building functioned as a telegraph office, dispensary, dining room, storeroom, kitchen, and quarters.

The three northernmost rooms of the old hospital were completely excavated, and limited excavations were conducted in the other rooms to expose the walls, floors, and internal features (Figure 14.10). Unlike the other rooms of buildings previously examined, most of the floors in the old hospital rooms were relatively intact. The northernmost room had a jaspe floor and the next two rooms to the south had floorboards and/or joists still in place (Figure 14.11). Both jaspe and wooden floors were evident in the other rooms.

Surprisingly the walls were in quite good shape. Those in the rooms of the old hospital reflected the earlier size—19 inches thick—whereas those of the later officers' quarters added to the back of hospital row mirrored those of the new hospital—26 inches thick. Remodeling of doorways was also evident in the second and third rooms in the northern portion of the old hospital.

The artifacts recovered from the excavations consisted primarily of bottle fragments, buttons, some faunal remains, nails, cans, window glass, tableware fragments, and miscellaneous metal pieces. A complete serving bowl was found in one of the corner fireplaces in the officers' quarters and a quart-size Anheuser Busch beer bottle was found in front of the fireplace in the northernmost room.

For the most part, the artifacts recovered from the three northern rooms provided no clues to the function of these rooms. Those recovered in the other rooms are clearly residentially related and appear to be reflective more of officers rather than civilians or laundresses. Thus we are not able to address the research question concerning the economic status of civilians with any degree of certainty.

Summary

The excavations conducted at Fort Craig were quite successful given the field time and the number of participants. Although modifications to the research design had to be implemented in order to maximize the data recovery, these excavations were successful in recovering material and data that enabled us to address most of the various research topics and to meet the goals of the project.

Economic Status of Personnel

The excavations within the soldiers' and officers' quarters indicated a definite economic difference between the officers and the enlisted men, not only in the number and variety of commodities and dietary remains found but also architecturally. A larger percentage of personal items was also recovered from the officers' quarters, which further supports the higher status of the officers. Economic differences between the military and civilian employees could not be ascertained because we were not able to find the quarters of the latter group.

Reliance on Local Economy

Several of the material remains recovered clearly are of local origin. Speciation of the wood recovered from the various buildings indicated that it was primarily locally available resources. Fort Craig did operate its own sawmill in the Sacramento Mountains to the northwest.

Numerous peach and apricot pits were also recovered, which may have been obtained from a local source. Excavations conducted at Paraje, a small town located about 10 miles south of Fort Craig, recovered numerous peach and apricot pits.[10]

Locally obtained tan earthenware jar fragments were recovered from the trash dump east of the hospital. Dr. Robert McKay, post surgeon during part of 1869, noted in his diary that he used a similar jar to make a water filtering system for the hospital.[11]

As further evidence of reliance on local economy, post returns and official letters report the hiring of local people for various jobs at the fort. These include employment as guides, masons, carpenters, herders, and teamsters.

Effectiveness of the Army's Shipping of Goods

Fort Craig served as a sub-depot for shipping goods to many of the southern New Mexico forts. From the analysis of the artifact assemblage, it appears that there was not much lag time (barring floods and attacks on supply trains) in getting supplies to the fort. The ammunition recovered indicates that the soldiers were equipped with up-to-date bullets, and most of the military insignia and buttons (except for two buttons) reflect the various uniform changes instituted by the Army. The two earlier-style buttons probably reflect curation of an earlier uniform rather than shipping problems. The lack of evidence of reuse on artifacts also suggests that the Army did its best to get materials to the fort.

Role of the Railroad

The north-south line of the AT & SF railroad and its subsidiary, the New Mexico and Southern Pacific, was completed through the Rio Grande Valley in 1880. The town of San Marcial, located about six miles to the north, became the railhead for Fort Craig. When Fort Craig was reactivated in 1880, the first troops to occupy the fort came by rail. Other fort correspondence indicates that troops were moved up and down the valley by rail for some of their scouting missions.

The predominance of bottles manufactured after 1880 attests to the impact of the railroad. Other items such as the variety of canned goods and up-to-date ammunition also support the importance of the railroad.

Environmental Adaptation

As noted above, most of the milled limber recovered from the buildings came from a local source. Firewood and coal used in the fireplaces and stoves also came from local sources. Charcoal found in some of the fireplaces was from wood gathered in the bosque below the fort, and the coal came from mines in Carthage located about 30 miles to the northeast. The adobe bricks, basalt rocks used in the foundations and the guardhouse, and the jaspe all came from local sources. The faunal remains indicate that both the soldiers and officers supplemented their diets with deer, ducks, and fish from the Rio Grande.

Impact of Vandalism

Pot holes are evident throughout many of the buildings and in the latrine areas outside of the fort. Despite this evidence of relic hunting, the excavations have shown that the impact of vandalism has been minimal.

In summary, the work conducted at Fort Craig during the five sessions indicates that preservation is still good within the buildings and that despite 100+ years of relic hunting, vandalism, and natural erosion, the archaeological record is far more intact and complex than previously thought. Also evident is an enthusiasm among the general public for this type of project and a caring and concern for the fragile nature of these historic resources.

These excavations have provided a unique opportunity for professionals and amateurs to work together to preserve our national heritage. They have also aided in the enhancement of the Bureau of Land Management's long-term goals for the fort by providing data for the interpretation programs, as well as laying the groundwork for the visitor management program. •

Notes

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2. Robert Utley, "Fort Craig (LA 1091). National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form" (1958). On file, Laboratory of Anthropology, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.
3. John P. Wilson, "Notes on Fort Craig (LA 1091)" (1966). On file, Laboratory of Anthropology, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.
4. Michael P. Marshall and Henry J. Walt, *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 1984), pp. 273–274.
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9. John S. Billings, *A Report on Barracks and Hospitals.* Circular No. 4, U.S. Department of War, Surgeon General's Office, 1870. (Reprinted in 1974 by Sol Lewis).
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11. McKay, *Little Pills.*

APPENDIX A

George A. Agogino

A Lonely Lady

THE FEMALE BURIAL JUST OUTSIDE THE FORT CRAIG COMPOUND

[Editors' note: Early in 1985 a Bureau of Reclamation heavy equipment operator working in the gravel pit bordering the Fort Craig compound fence discovered fragments of human bone in an area being recontoured. The equipment operator, Walter Huffman, recognized the possibility that the bones might be human and immediately stopped the disturbance and notified Bureau of Reclamation supervisors and archaeologists. The Bureau of Land Management, Socorro Resource Area Archeologist, Charles Carroll, recovered the highly fragmented human remains and forwarded them to Stephen Ireland, Bureau of Reclamation Archeologist, then stationed in Amarillo, Texas. Dr. George Agogino, Distinguished Research Professor in Anthropology at Eastern New Mexico University, analyzed the remains for the Bureau of Reclamation. The following is compiled from Dr. Agogino's presentation of his analysis for the Fort Craig conference.]



A complete human skeleton *has 22 bones in the skull and 184 bones in the postcranial skeleton. In most instances, if the remains are in good condition and relatively complete, obtaining forensic information for the desired analyses is relatively simple. Unfortunately, this was not the case with the Fort Craig burial, which was scattered and broken by earth-moving equipment.*

The skull, though badly damaged, remained relatively intact in the facial region owing to an encrustation of a cementlike sandy-clay deposit that filled the entire skull cavity and protected the facial area. No attempt was made to remove this protective intrusion, since the facial bones were fragile and would disintegrate in the removal process. Roughly 200 fragmentary and segmented cranial bones were found with this burial, an average of 10 segments from each bone of the skull. To compound the difficulty, the impact of the earth-moving machinery separated the external and endocranial sections of many bones in the cranium.

Determining the sex of a skeleton is often difficult, and in this instance the fragmentary remains compounded the problem. It became clear, however, that

we were dealing with a young female. The teeth were modest in size, the styloid and mastoid process were small, and the mandible delicate with a pointed chin. Muscle attachments in the occipital region were slight, suggestive of a female. Owing to the condition of the cranium, it was impossible to reconstruct the shape of the skull. Females have bulbous foreheads, and the upper margins of the eye sockets are sharp, in contrast to males who have more rounded upper eye sockets. The postcranial skeleton, while fragmentary, did exhibit a wide sciatic notch in the pelvic area, which is a female trait, and measurements of the femur heads fell within the female range. With female characteristics dominant throughout, I felt there was little question that the remains were those of a woman.

Age was determined by examination of the existing cranial sutures, tooth eruption and wear, as well as the still-separated epiphyseal ends of the long bones. The adult third molars erupt between eighteen and twenty-one years of age. From the lack of wear on the subject's third molars, it was evident that they had just recently erupted. All existing evidence suggested that the young lady died between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one years. This was supported by visual examination of the pubic symphysis, which changes in shape every few years. A number of variables that cannot be determined from basic osteological analysis, mainly diet, illness, genetics, and climate variations, can affect the indications of age discussed here, however.

Usually stature is obtained by measuring the complete long bones of the body. Any single bone will give you a close estimate, but averaging the stature measurements indicated by all of the existing long bones generally gives close to an exact height. The long bones of our young lady were fragmented and incomplete, but a close estimate was arrived at by reconstructing existing fragments of long bones and estimating missing sections. It was determined that the young lady was roughly five foot, four inches in height.

This left only the question of why a young female would be unearthed so close to the military cemetery of Fort Craig. We have no way of determining why she was buried close to the governmental cemetery or even if the burial was contemporaneous with the occupation of Fort Craig. If we speculate that the woman was in some way connected with activities at the fort, the "lady in question" might be a "questionable lady," but in all fairness she might well have been an adjunct employee of the camp, cleaning, washing, or doing other manual chores for the soldiers. She might also be a daughter of someone who worked at the fort or even the offspring or wife of one of the fort personnel. If many children were present at the fort she might have been a school teacher.

Examination of the bones gave no clue as to the cause of death. The bones are so fragmentary that physical injury would not be apparent. It was noted that the left central incisor of the maxilla had been dislodged but not lost shortly before

death. The tooth protruded some two millimeters beyond the other teeth, and this condition had to have occurred a short time before the woman's demise, or it would have caused unusual wear patterns on the lower left cranial incisor.

The race of the deceased was determined by the shovel-shaped incisors that were pronounced enough to assure that the remains were either Indian or Mestizo. It is also possible that the dead girl might be Hispanic, since most Spanish Americans have a strong Indian genetic heritage.

That is all the information we could extract from the skeleton, a young lady who met death at a time when most young people are just looking forward to adult life. She was either Indian or Mestizo and died in the full bloom of young womanhood, shortly after receiving a hard blow to the upper jaw that dislodged a central incisor tooth.

This research was conducted for and financed by the Regional Bureau of Reclamation Office. At the time of the project the regional office was at Amarillo, Texas. This office has now been relocated to Billings, Montana. Permission to present and publish this material has been granted by the regional office. •

Cranial Bones

FACIAL AREA

Intact Maxilla
Segments Right and Left
    Zygomatic
Partial Nasal Area
Sections Right and Left Ethmoid
Lacrimal Bones (Eye Socket)
Three Sections of the Mandible

OTHER

Five Sections Frontal
Three Sections Left Parietal
Three Sections Right Parietal
Small Section Right Sphenoid
Partial Left and Right Mastoid
Sections Left and Right
    Occipital Condyles
Four Sections Dorsal Occipital

Bones of the Central Body

Right Scapula
Segment Glenoid Cavity
Segment Coracoid Process
Left Scapula
Glenoid Cavity
Coracoid and Segment Body
Broken AcromionSternum,
    section of body portion
Ribs

CERVICAL VERTEBRAE

Atlas, segment
Axis, segment
Four relatively complete
    and seven fragments

THORACIC VERTEBRAE

Four nearly complete
Ten badly broken sections

Sacrum, promontory section
    of anterior half

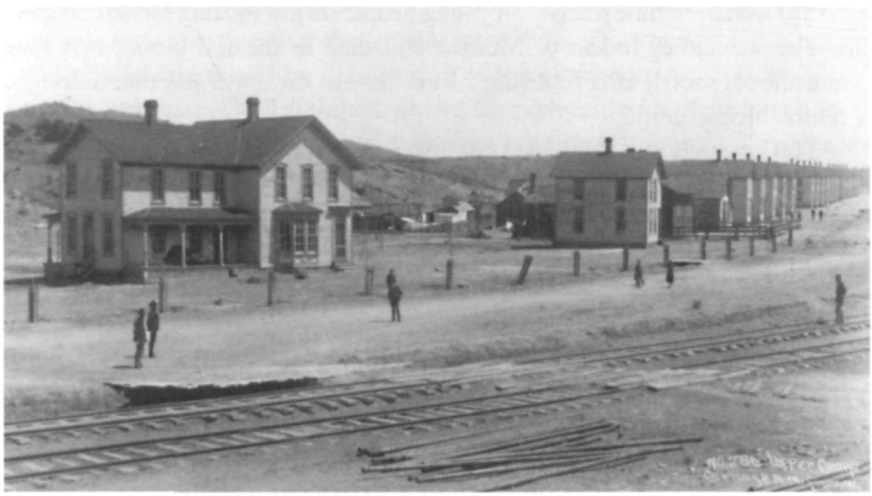


Figure B.1
Upper camp from west Carthage, New Mexico ca. 1886
(photo J. R. Riddle, Museum of New Mexico neg# 76081)

APPENDIX B

Howard B. Nickelson

The History of the Carthage Coal Mine



The Carthage Coal Field is located about ten miles east of San Antonio and lies south of Highway 380. It is a small field covering about ten square miles. The coal, which is high volatile C bituminous coal containing about 10.6 percent ash, 0.7 percent sulphur, and 12,900 BTUs, makes excellent coke. The one economic bed is from four to six feet thick. The field lies on the east wall of the Rio Grande rift and, as a result, is crossed by faults.

Gen. Estanislado Montoya, who claimed the land under a Spanish land grant, is believed to have opened a mine about 1856 from which he sold coal to the troops at Fort Craig. It is not certain whether the general hired miners or the troops mined the coal. By the early 1860s, the general was in trouble with his grant, as the Court of Private Land Claims denied it, and the land became part of the public domain. The date of the court decision is unclear, but 1863 appears to be indicated. Once the land became public, the coal was undoubtedly mined by the troops until 1879, when the fort was closed for a time.

Twitchell, in *Leading Facts of New Mexico History,* mentions that the troops also mined enough coal to supply the smithing needs of Fort Seldon, Fort Bayard, and Fort Stanton. He also tells of the danger of crossing the Rio Grande with loaded freight wagons: "In 1881, at about the time that the Santa Fe railroad was building a bridge across the river at this point to the mines at Carthage, two six-mule teams belonging to the army which had been at Carthage for coal were caught in the treacherous sands of the Rio Grande at this point and lost, and the government drivers with them narrowly escaped the same fate."[1]

In 1881 the Santa Fe Railroad was laying track down the Rio Grande Valley to connect with southern transcontinental routes. The Santa Fe showed a great deal of interest in the Carthage coal field as a source of fuel for their engines and for coal to make coke. The San Pedro Coal and Coke Company was formed to

provide for these needs. The company opened three mines, the Carthage No. 1, the Carthage No. 2, and the SAF mine, and built 76 coke ovens at San Antonio.

By 1882, when the railroad to the mines was completed, the company mines had produced 16,321 tons of coal. Coal production continued to increase until 1888 when it reached 82,467 tons. The next year, however, production dropped to only 50 tons. No known records indicate that the old mine used by the soldiers remained in use after the commercial mines opened, even though Fort Craig was occupied until 1885; it was probably easier to purchase coal from the San Pedro Coal and Coke Company than to mine and haul it to Fort Craig. John James was manager of the coal properties, but the real organizer for the development of the field was Alexander Bowie, a mining engineer with the Santa Fe Railroad.

By 1889 the San Pedro Coal and Coke Company's coke ovens and railroad were being dismantled and shipped to the coal mines at Cerrillos. At least two reasons have been put forth for the demise of the Carthage coal mines. One is that the mine reserves were exhausted; the other indicates that the need for coke to smelt ores declined when the silver depression closed silver mines and smelters all over the West. Whatever the cause, by 1896 all was gone.

By 1900 interest in the field revived. Robert Duffy formed a company and began to reopen and develop the mine that the soldiers at Fort Craig had operated years before, which had come to be known as the Government mine. Mr. Duffy had ownership problems and lost his right to the land in 1902 or 1903. In 1903 the Carthage Coal Company was formed by businessmen from San Antonio; A. H. Hilton was made general manager, and James Richardson was made superintendent. This company reopened the Government mine, the Hilton mine (formerly the Carthage No. 3 mine), and the Bernal mine and proposed re-laying the tracks of the old Santa Fe spur. Late in 1904 the Carthage Coal Company fell into receivership, and Powell Stackhouse was appointed trustee. The mines did not operate during fiscal year 1904–1905. During this time the Carthage Fuel Company was formed. The original stockholders of the Carthage Coal Company, and new money from the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, provided capital for this operation.

Two groups were interested in building a spur track to the mines, and their differences had to be settled by litigation, with New Mexico Midland Company winning over the San Antonio Company on May 4, 1906. A railroad was soon built, and the twelve-mile haul by freight wagons was eliminated.

The Carthage Coal Company produced a total of about 840,000 tons of coal, and the last of its mines was closed in 1925. Most of the coal was sold in El Paso and Old Mexico.

Several other mines, such as the McIntyre-Manilla, were open for a few years, but most were short lived. The Emerson Allare mines operated from 1900 to 1915 and produced about 108,000 tons. In 1915 Barklay Kinney opened the No. 1 Kinney mine and eventually operated four more, all but the No. 1 on federal leases. Because of his previous experience as mine superintendent for the Carthage Fuel Company, Kinney was able to work out the fault system, and he discovered a block of coal on the west side of the field. A modern camp, called Tokay after a box of grapes, was built to house the miners at the Kinney operations. A great deal of the production was used to fire bricks in a brick yard that the Kinney family owned in Albuquerque. Total production from all the Kinney mines was in the neighborhood of 788,000 tons, of which about 544,000 tons came from the No. 1 mine. These mines closed in 1929.

Jack Hart, Rafael Soto, and A. B. Baca operated a small mine on the west side of the field from 1935 until about 1968. This mine produced from a small area of coal between the faults that had not been extracted during the Carthage Fuel Company mining period.

The Carthage Coal Field played an important part in New Mexico history. It kept soldiers at Fort Craig warm, put shoes on their mules and horses, and tightened their wagon rims; it made coke to smelt the rich silver ores and fueled the Santa Fe engines; it heated countless homes from Socorro into Old Mexico; and it left behind the ghost towns of Carthage and Tokay. •

Note

1. Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *Leading Facts of New Mexico History* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1911–1917), vol. 4, p. 360.



Fort Craig in the late 1950s
(Museum of New Mexico neg# 112220)

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