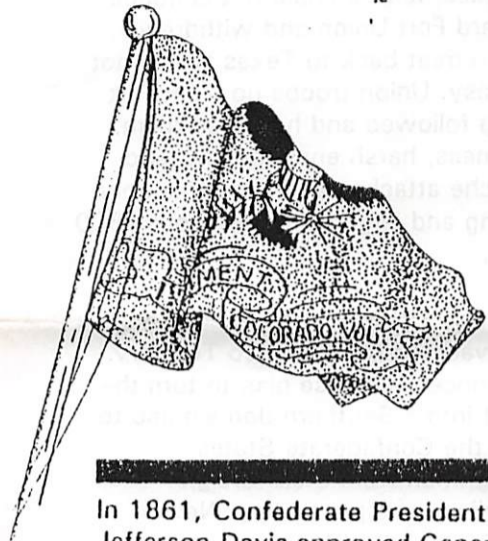


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The Battle of Glorieta Pass March 26 - 28, 1862

In 1861, Confederate President Jefferson Davis approved General Henry Hopkins Sibley's plan to raise a force of Texans to invade the West. His objectives were to capture military supplies from Union forts in New Mexico and recruit disenchanted New Mexicans, Utah Mormons, and sympathetic miners in Colorado to their cause. The captured mineral wealth of the West would enrich the Confederacy and, if the ports of California could be taken, the South would have blockade-free ports for trade with Europe. In early 1862, Sibley began his move into New Mexico and up the Rio Grande with 3000 Fourth, Fifth and Seventh Texas Mounted Riflemen.

In June, 1861 Col. Edward R.S. Canby, Union commander of New Mexico, learned of the invasion plans. Because only 2500 Federal forces

were in New Mexico, Canby appealed to the Governors of New Mexico and Colorado to organize companies of volunteers to bolster his numbers. By February, 1862 Canby reported that he had 4000 troops at the ready.

February 21, 1862 saw the first major battle in the territory: at Valverde, near Fort Craig, 100 miles south of Albuquerque. Effectively drawing the Union troops out of the fort, the Texans won the hard fought battle. Canby and his troops were forced back into the fort. Sibley, not wanting to risk casualties that might be inflicted by attacking the fort or having artillery supplies for a long siege, decided to press on to Albuquerque. He had no fear of initial pursuit: the Union forces were demoralized, disorganized and overly cautious about continuing the fight.

As the Battle at Valverde waged, 950 men of the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers, formed in response to Canby's call, began their march to New Mexico. They covered 400 miles to Fort Union in 13 days - arriving March 10 to reinforce the fort's 800 troops. The Colorado Volunteers, under the command of Col. John P. Slough left Fort Union on the Santa Fe Trail and camped at Kozlowski's Stage Stop near the Pecos Ruins on the eve of March 26.

Meanwhile, Sibley sent Maj. Charles Pyron and his Fifth Texas Regiment ahead to capture the unprotected capital of Santa Fe. The Confederate flag flew over the Palace of the Governors on March 13. Pyron's regiment then made their way up the Santa Fe Trail toward Fort Union and camped at Apache Canyon, unaware of the Federal Forces camped 12 miles east.

March 26

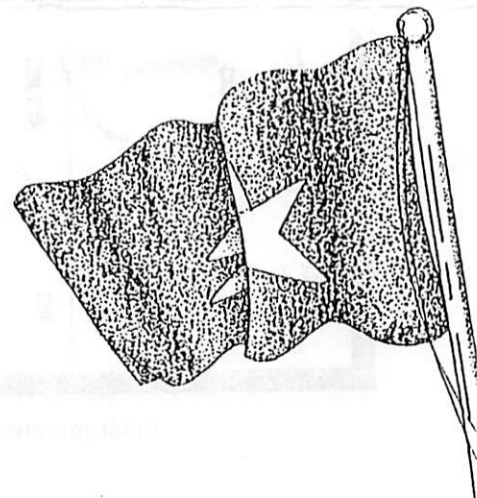
Major John M. Chivington and a group of Colorado Volunteers were sent out from Kozlowski's on a reconnaissance mission towards Santa Fe to find the location and size of the Texas forces. They surprised and captured a Confederate scouting party near present day Valencia. A short distance away, they ran into the main body of Pyron's Confederates who unleashed their artillery. Union skirmishers were effectively deployed. Their rapid fire quickly made the Confederate position impossible to defend and they withdrew. The Union Cavalry failed to charge as instructed, enabling the Confederates to escape and reestablish their defenses. They destroyed a log bridge to impede the Union advance. Union soldiers outflanked the Texans forcing another retreat. This time the Union cavalry, leaping the gap where the bridge once

was, charged into their midst. About 70 Confederates were pushed into a small canyon and captured. As night fell, both sides called a truce to care for their casualties.

Maj. Pyron withdrew back to Apache Canyon, set up his defenses and waited for reinforcements under Lt. Col. William Scurry to arrive from Galisteo. The Union troops withdrew to Kozlowski's where they were united with the rest of Federal forces from Fort Union. Both forces readied themselves in anticipation of an attack the next day but March 27 ended without incident.

That night, Union spies warned Colonel Slough that a strongly reinforced Confederate force was nearby. A plan was devised to split the forces. Major Chivington and Lt.

Col. Manuel Chavez of the New Mexico Volunteers would take 430 men over Glorieta Mesa to harass the Confederate rear. Col. Slough and the remainder of the troops, about 900 men, would move directly against the Confederates in the pass.



MARCH 28

As the day began, both sides began to move toward each other unaware of the other's position. To speed progress, Lt. Col. Scurry left his supply train with a small guard back at Apache Canyon. With approximately 600 men, Scurry established a skirmish line about one-half mile west of Pigeon's Ranch.

Col. Slough's men reached Pigeon's Ranch and broke ranks to fill their canteens. Suddenly Union scouts rushed back to inform them that the Confederates were close at hand. Before they could organize they were under fire. Battle lines were quickly formed across the Santa Fe Trail along Windmill Hill. After being pushed back, Union artillery positioned themselves on Artillery Hill while other troops scrambled up Sharpshooter's Ridge to face the Texans. The Texans attacked the

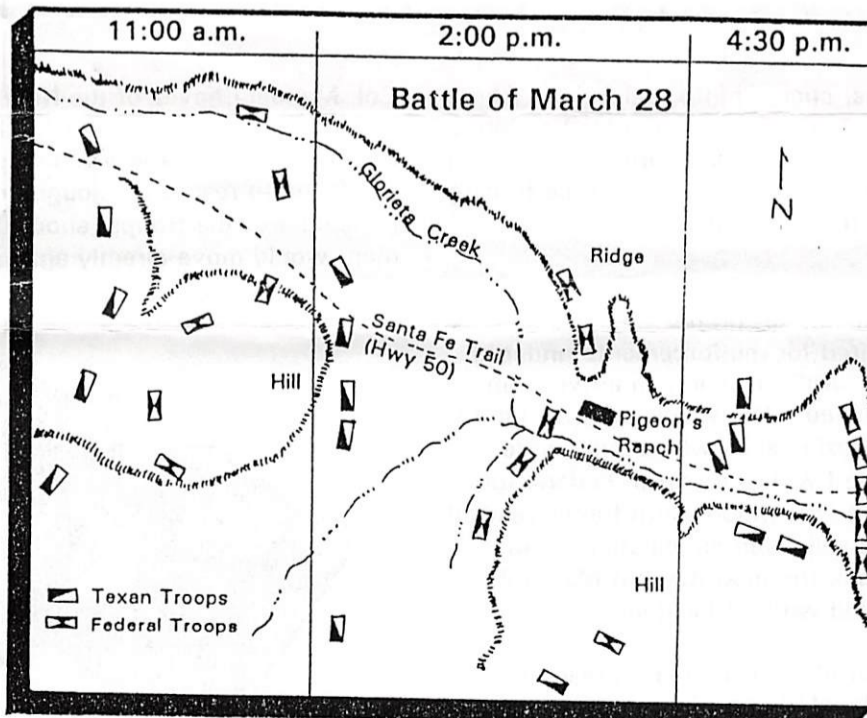
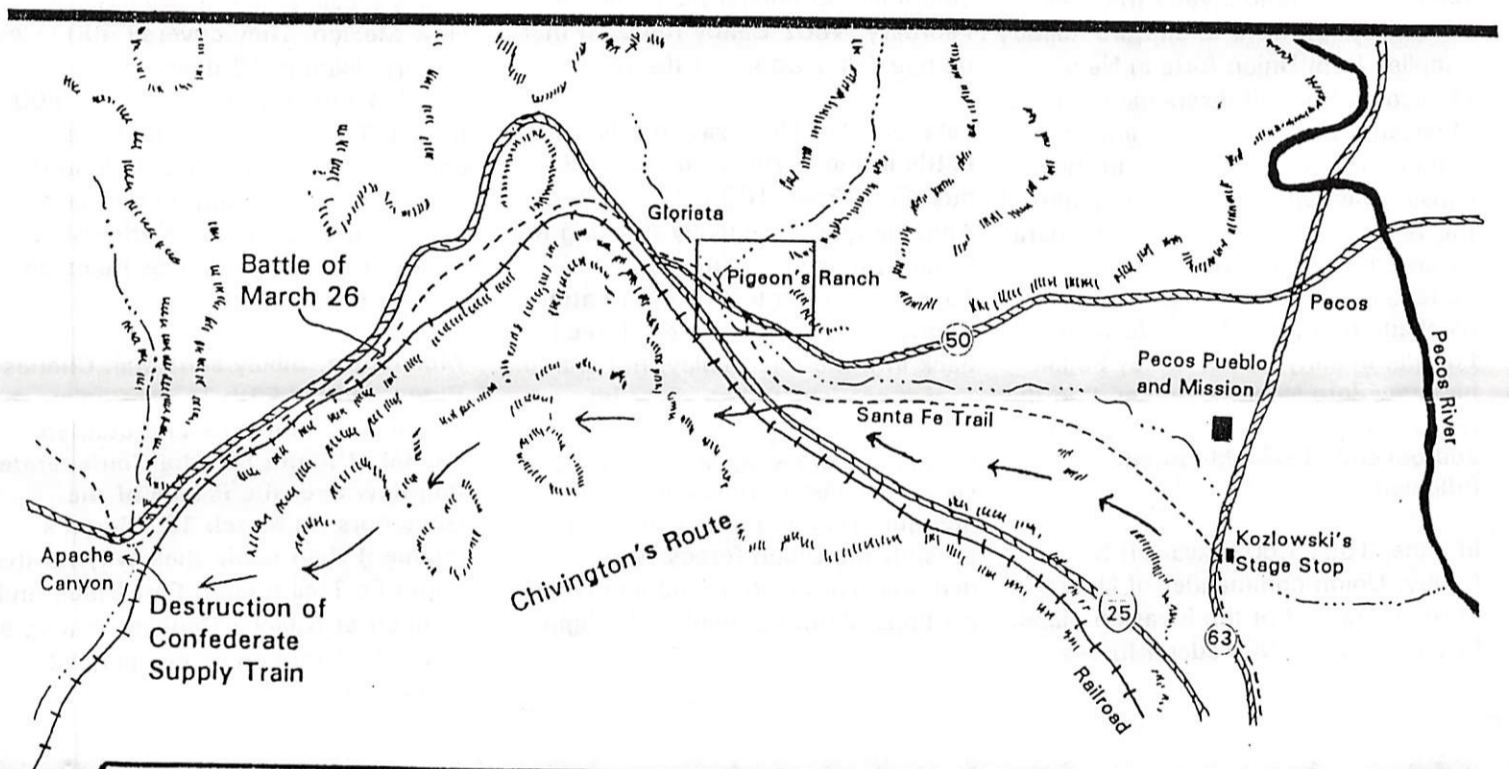
Union right and during intense fighting managed to drive Union troops off Artillery Hill. Using this new superior position they were able to fire down upon the Union troops and drive them farther back. They charged the Federal artillery which had formed a new position one-half mile east of Pigeon's Ranch but were repulsed.

As darkness fell, Col. Slough ordered his troops to fall back to the camp at Kozlowski's. Both sides were near exhaustion and the fight could not have lasted much longer. The Texans were left holding the battlefield and claimed victory.

Their celebration was short lived. Word was received that all the Confederate supply wagons had been destroyed at Apache Canyon. Major Chivington's route to the enemy rear had taken him to the eastern edge of

Glorieta Mesa where he saw the lightly guarded Confederate supply train below. Chivington and his men scrambled down the mesa, burned the wagons, ran off the stock, and spiked the cannon. Lt. Col. Scurry, without supplies, felt he could not continue toward Fort Union and withdrew. The retreat back to Texas would not be easy. Union troops up from Fort Craig followed and harassed them. Sickness, harsh environment, and Apache attacks decimated this once strong and eager force to about 1500 men.

By July, 1862, all Confederate troops had vacated New Mexico Territory. The once grandiose plan to turn the west into a Southern domain and to give the Confederate States recognition from their foreign suppliers was put to rest. New Mexico and the West remained under Union control.



Enlargement of Pigeon's Ranch Area

Apache Canyon March 26

Federals: 5 killed, 14 wounded
Texans: 32 killed, 43 wounded

Glorieta March 28

Federals: 29 killed, 64 wounded
Texans: 36 killed, 60 wounded

To preserve significant landmarks and resources of the Battle of Glorieta Pass, Congress established the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park in November, 1990. The Glorieta Unit is currently closed to public use. For further information contact the Superintendent, Pecos National Historical Park, P.O.Box-418, Pecos, New Mexico, 87552.