

Pecos

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Pecos National Historical Park



Battle of Glorieta Pass - 1862

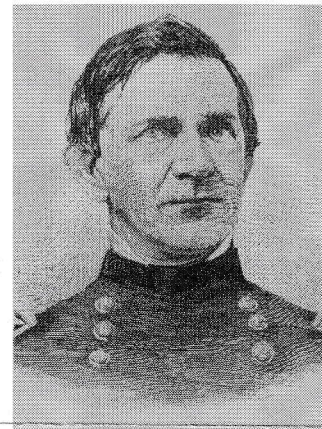


As the need for funding grew for the Confederate cause, General Henry Hopkins Sibley devised a plan. Raising a force of Texans to invade New Mexico Territory, he set out on a venture to enrich the Confederacy. What was his plan? To capture military supplies, recruit for the Confederate cause, and take advantage of the mineral wealth of the West. However, his entire venture would be thrown completely off track by a group of angry Colorado miners and New Mexico Volunteers.

Introduction

As General Sibley started making his way up the Rio Grande, Col. Edward R.S. Canby, Union commander of the Department of New Mexico, began organizing companies across Colorado and New Mexico. Fearing the loss of their precious minerals, the Union found it easy to recruit the Colorado volunteers they needed to fight the Texans. Canby readied 4000 troops by early 1862 to face the Texan force.

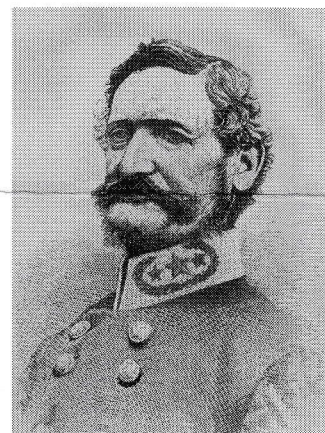
An early battle at Valverde south of Socorro proved indecisive; Confederate forces continued to march north, seizing Albuquerque and Santa Fe and continuing towards Colorado. On March 25th, a Union advance force under the command of Maj. John M. Chivington set up Camp Lewis at Kozlowski's Stage Stop near the Pecos Pueblo Ruins.



Union Colonel Edward R.S. Canby

March 26 and 27

After securing Albuquerque and Santa Fe, Confederate Texan forces moved up the Santa Fe Trail. Setting up a supply camp at Johnson's Ranch on the west side of Glorieta Pass, Confederate forces encountered Union companies moving toward Santa Fe from Kozlowski's Trading Post on the 26th. After a spirited but short battle on the west side of Glorieta Pass, both sides returned to their camps and awaited reinforcements. Anticipating attack, neither army moved on the 27th, instead preparing defenses and readying the men for the next day.



Confederate General Henry Hopkins Sibley

March 28

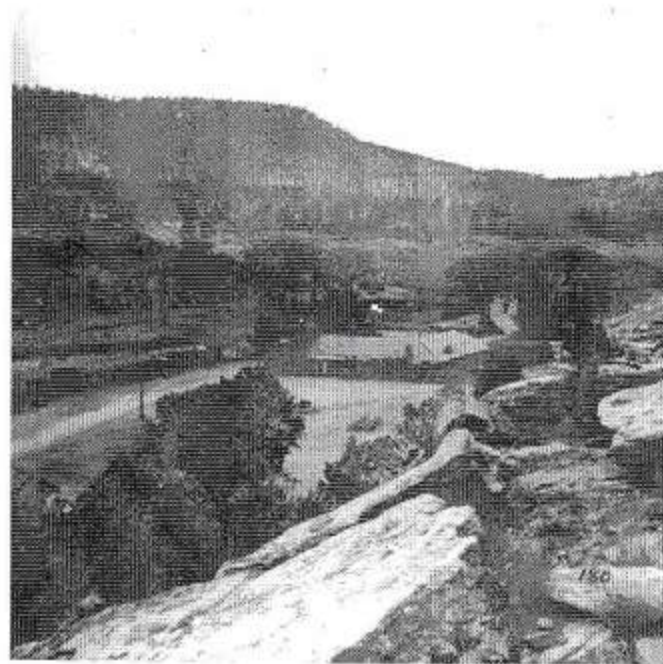
With battle plans in place, both Union and Confederate armies advanced into Glorieta Pass. The Union detached a third of their force to Glorieta Mesa to bypass the Santa Fe Trail, guided by local New Mexicans. Meanwhile, the main armies fought near Pigeon's Ranch, near the top of Glorieta Pass.

At Pigeon's Ranch, the Confederates under Col. William Reid Scurry forced the Union back and held the battlefield under their control. Thinking they had won, the Confederates triumphantly occupied the field.

In the meantime, flanking Union troops discovered the Confederates had left all their supplies at Johnson's Ranch. The Union soldiers drove off the few Confederate guards, burned their supplies, and retreated back over the mesa.

As word arrived that they had lost all of their supplies, the Confederate victory was

short lived. Without supplies, the campaign could not continue. The Confederates fell back to Santa Fe immediately after the battle, eventually retreating all the way back to Texas.



Pigeon's Ranch from Sharpshooter's Ridge

Conclusion

By July 1862, all Confederate troops had left New Mexico Territory. The grand Confederate plan to dominate the West ended at Glorieta. The West remained under Union control.

Many of the great issues of the Civil War had little relevance for residents of the Territory. Arguments over the right to secede may have been of little interest in a land far removed from Washington and Richmond. Both sides viewed the West as a prize, concerned that new land acquired in the Mexican War would upset the balance of power between slave and free states.

Local New Mexican issues rarely included slavery. There were few African Americans within the territory and large Indian and

Hispanic populations faced different problems than the rest of the nation.

The effects of the Confederate invasion in 1862 resonated long after the guns fell silent. The threat of future Confederate attacks and an increase in Indian raids led to a local strengthening of the Army. Some Indian groups in New Mexico Territory capitalized on the chaos of war to reclaim lost land; others were desperate since the war had disrupted government treaty payments. All faced an uncertain future.

Learn more about this defining moment in our nation's history at:
<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/index.htm>

