

Distant Bugles, Distant Drums: The Union Response to the Confederate Invasion of New Mexico, by Flint Whitlock, University Press of Colorado, 2006, 293 pages, \$29.95.

Reviewed by Jon Guttman

On July 5, 1861, Major Henry Hopkins Sibley, inventor of a new tent and field stove for the U.S. Army, arrived in Richmond, Va., to offer his services to Confederate President Jefferson Davis—and to make an ambitious proposal. Having just come from the Southwestern territories, Sibley wished to lead a brigade of about 3,000 Texans on a campaign that he believed would secure the gold and silver mines of New Mexico and Arizona, and possibly even conquer its way across California to gain a seaport on the Pacific. Sibley was confident that odds of such a campaign succeeding were improved by the poor fighting quality of the region's Hispanic residents, as witnessed by both Sibley and Davis during the Mexican-American War, and the likelihood that the other inhabitants—Southern-born settlers, miners and soldiers, and even possibly Indians—would welcome the Confederates as liberators and join their ranks. The prospect of much-needed gold, a Pacific outlet and even the possibility of a successful campaign encouraging Britain and France to recognize and aid the Confederacy convinced Davis to approve the plan, and on July 8, Sibley, now a brigadier general, was on his way back to Texas to organize the first major Confederate offensive of the Civil War.

If the West (i.e., the Mississippi River region) has played second fiddle to the grandly publicized Eastern theater, the frontier, or trans-Mississippi theater—encompassing all territories from west of that river to the Pacific coast—is practically unknown to all but the most avid Civil War buffs. In *Distant Bugles, Distant Drums: The Union Response to the Confederate Invasion of New Mexico*, however, military historian Flint Whitlock makes a reasonable case for Sibley's Southwestern offensive presenting a very real threat to the Union at a time when the East was witnessing one discouraging setback after another at Big Bethel, Manassas and Ball's Bluff. Although primarily devoted to the manner in which Colonel Edward R.S. Canby mobilized U.S. and territorial militia forces to meet the Texans' onslaught,

Whitlock's research offers plenty of balance to his coverage—much of it through firsthand accounts—to a remarkably rigorous struggle on the outskirts of the American empire. Whitlock's sympathies may be founded on the Union side, and particularly with the Coloradan volunteers who played a critical role in the campaign's outcome, but he feels equally compelled to admire the courage and stamina of the Texans who did their best to carry out Sibley's designs, very much in spite of their commander's erratic leadership.

Whitlock's book is a door to debate of the Southwest's importance. *Distant Bugles, Distant Drums* is worthy of its title. It is a book of character, and it is a book of the Civil War with the Wild West. Sibley, known to his men as the "Walking Whiskey Keg," is a contrast of ingenuity and vision with alcoholism and an aversion to the administrative responsibilities of command. He preferred leaving logistical matters to take care of themselves, with calamitous results. Colonel John R. Baylor, who preceded Sibley into New Mexico, proved a murderous hellion to Yankee and Indian alike. Taking charge when Sibley was too "ill" to command, Colonels William Read Scurry and Thomas Green saved the day for the Confederates at the Battle of Valverde.

Among the local talent aiding the cautious Canby was William Gilpin, Colorado's first territorial governor, whose attempt to finance his volunteers by issuing treasury drafts before checking with Washington would bury his political career in scandal, and Colonel John P. Slough, whose arrogant, tactless command of the 1st Colorado Volunteers climaxed in his spending much of the Battle of Glorieta Pass behind cover—to avoid being shot by some of his own troops. One of the Mexican volunteer units was led by the already legendary frontiersman Colonel Christopher "Kit" Carson. Nervous as he entered battle with no military experience whatsoever, preacher-turned-volunteer Major John M. Chivington displayed remarkable coolness as he grew into his command from the instant the shooting started at Glorieta Pass. He emerged from that fight as the Union hero of the hour—only to dramatically descend into infamy through his massacre of a nominally peaceful

Cheyenne village at Big Sandy Creek in November 1864. Chivington's deputy, Captain Edward W. "Ned" Wyncoop, would acquire his own share of controversy in the settlement of the territory.

Carried out amid a harsh winter in the deserts and mountains of Arizona and New Mexico, the Southwestern campaign tested the endurance of nearly all concerned, but particularly the Texan invaders and the Coloradans who, equally ill-prepared for the trek ahead, marched their way over the Rockies to meet them. The principal battles are presented in fair detail with maps and eyewitness testimony, reaching their turning point at Glorieta Pass, where the toughest survivors from Texas and Colorado met head-on in what the author describes as less a battlefield than a confined battle tunnel. It was often a hand-to-hand struggle between hard-bitten men, engendering a different sort of ferocity from larger-scale Eastern or Western engagements. Among the Rebel casualties, a Texan reported, was Captain Charles Buckholts, "found dead close-by three Federals who had undoubtedly been killed by his knife. He was killed by a sabre thrust, the one doing it being killed by the Captain with his pistol before he expired."

For Civil War scholars interested in a neglected front that, but for a few factors turning out differently, might have been of more vital importance, *Distant Bugles, Distant Drums* is highly recommended. It also makes an equally wild and woolly Civil War or Western read alike.

No Party Now: Politics in the Civil War North, by Adam I.P. Smith, Oxford University Press, 2006, 280 pages, \$55. Reviewed by Chuck Leddy

When the United States is at war, there's an age-old tendency to "rally round the flag"—a feeling that partisanship should give way to the need for wartime unity. So it was in the North during the Civil War, according to historian and author Adam I.P. Smith, who teaches American history at University College London. Yet his new book *No Party Now* explores the political discord that lurked beneath this surface of apparent unity in the Union during wartime.

"Drawing on a nonpartisan patriotic ideal dating back to the founders, Lincoln supporters presented a vision of patriotic