

TEXANS LIED ABOUT GLORIETA PASS

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THE GAZETTE

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THURSDAY, October 2, 2009

TEXANS LIED ABOUT GLORIETA PASS

Document Claimed a Confederate Victory

BY DAVE HUGHES

YOUR HUB CONTRIBUTOR

I have come into possession of the text of a rare document from the Civil War: An official report by General Sibley's Texas Army to Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, concerning the outcome of the Battle of Glorieta Pass in Northern New Mexico in March, 1862. That campaign should be of interest to all westsiders who have followed the history of Colorado City, founded years before Colorado Springs even existed, and who celebrate that history within the National Historic District of Old Colorado City, from Territory Days to touring our museum at Bancroft Park. In fact, you can read the whole Glorieta story on myWeb site – davehugheslegacy.net

Now, after all these years, surfaces a document in which Texans bragged after one of the worst defeats the Confederates ever suffered at the hands of the Union's "First Colorado" at Glorieta Pass. Yet the Texans claimed it was a glorious victory! Those Texans never change! You can credit west-sider Jay Lowery, who grew up locally and took an early interest in the history of

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Colorado Territory (and even wrote, as a high school student, a paper about Glorieta) for turning up this incredible document and sharing it with us. He recently found it in — what else — a 1958 book titled “A Confederate Reader” full of Civil War articles and documents, including “Texans Invade New Mexico” from the Southern view- point,

Here is the report: "San Antonio, Texas, April 27th, 1862 "His Excellency, President Davis: I have the honor to inform your Excellency of another glorious victory achieved by the Confederate army of New Mexico. On the 27th of March, Lt. Col. Scurry, with 1,000 men from 2nd, 4th, 5th and 7th Texas volunteers, met, attacked, whipped and routed 2,000 Federals, 23 miles east of Santa Fe. Our loss was 33 killed and 35 wounded - among the killed was Major Ragnet, and Capt. Buckholtz, of the 4th, and Major Shropshire of the 5th Texas mounted volunteers, Lt. Col. Scurry, commanding was twice slightly wounded, and Major Pyron, commanding battalion T.M.R., had his horse blown from under him by a shell. The enemy's loss was over seven hundred killed and wounded — 700 being left on the field. Their rout was complete, and they were scattered from the battle field to Fort Union. The Confederate flag flies over Santa Fe and Albuquerque. At the latter place, the flag was made of a captured United States flag, raised upon a United States flag-staff — the salute fired by a captured United States battery, and Dixie played by a captured United States band. The Federal force defeated at Glorieta, consisted of 1,600 Pike's Peak volunteers and 600 regulars, under command of Col. Slough. I have the honor to inform your excellency, that I will wait upon you with important despatches in a few days. Very respectfully, Tom P. Ochiltree Assistant Adjutant General, - Army of New Mexico"

Now EVERY Coloradan knows that Jefferson Davis tried to invade New Mexico up the Rio Grande in 1862 with a 8,600-man mounted Texas Army led by General Sibley, in order to capture Fort Union where ample arms were stored, then drive toward Denver City to capture Colorado's capital and its gold to back the worthless Confederate dollar. Then to establish a western “empire” all the way to the Pacific.

And every Coloradan knows that Territorial Colorado's first governor, William Gilpin, swiftly raised the First Colorado Volunteer Infantry Regiment by issuing script on the Federal Treasury. There was not enough money for horses for all 1,200 recruits — including those from Colorado City, then the Territorial Capital. So it marched on foot 400 miles south in only 13 days, got to Fort Union before the Texans did, and sallied forth to do battle with the braggart Texans who had managed to bottle up Union General Canby and the New Mexico Militia in Fort Craig in southern New Mexico, before marching through Albuquerque and Santa Fe. And every Coloradan knows that 80 Texans were captured in the first day's clash in Apache Canyon, causing the rebels to change their derisive label of “Gilpin's Pet Lambs” to “The Regular Demons” by the end of the first day's battle. And every Coloradan knows that forceful abolitionist Major John Chivington, once a minister, turned fighter-leader, led 480 Coloradans around the flank of the Texas Army's main force which was pushing back the badly

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outnumbered Colorado main body under Colonel Slough. Chivington descended on the rear of the Texans, utterly destroying all the supplies and animals for the entire Confederate Army including 80 full wagons and 500 horses and mules. With only one casualty! It was a brilliant strategic blow which forced the Texas Army to hastily bury their dead and start a 300-mile retreat, ending back in Texas with only seven wagons, and less than 1,000 men, burying some of their Artillery in Albuquerque. A total and absolute defeat. The Confederacy never tried again. Yet Sibley's adjutant reported it as a glorious victory with huge exaggerations! He never even mentioned the loss of all their Supplies! ' Davis might have wondered why the report was sent from San Antonio, Texas if Sibley had won the day and occupied the Glorieta battle?eld of New Mexico after his "victory!" He retreated, all Jefferson Davis' plans dashed. In Colorado the campaign is called the "Little Gettysburg of the West" and it saved Colorado for the Union! ' , Then it was 131 years later, after 31 of Sibley's soldier's bodies were unearthed bun farmer in a mass graveaon' the Glorieta battle?eld in 1987 and reburied in a Santa Fe U.S. Veterans Cemetery in 1993, that Confederate gray- uniformed Texans came north again to honor their dead. They were unarmed this time. And now they bring money, not guns. But Texans never change! ' Now if you would like to tour the Glorieta Battle?eld" this fall or in early spring, just e-mail your interest to our Society. We are planning an overnight shared-cost trip in a rental passenger van, similar to our very successful trip to Sand Creek Battle?eld last year. We, would leave the ?rst morning from the Old Colorado City History Center, drive all the way down 1-25, eat lunch in Trinidad, visit the, Fort Union National Monument and its great book. store and stay overnight in the open-reservation Baptist Convention Center on' Glorieta Pass, Then on the second day, we'll go down' to the Pecos National Monument where a Monument, guide will guide us over the. battle?eld where unguided; visitors are prohibited. No walking. We'll drive back to Colorado Springs and should, arrive by late afternoon. The cost would be around \$150 each, all costs including your meals and rooms. We can inform you of a more exact cost and possible dates when we ?nd out how many are interested.