

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable
Vol. XLVI No. 7 March 2009



419th Regular Meeting

DATE: 6th March 2009

PLACE: Fairview Village, 200 Village Dr., Downers Grove, Il.

TIME: 8:00 PM

SPEAKER: Ron Carlson

TOPIC: "The Significance of the Trans-Mississippi Civil War in American History"

Many Historians have written that the events that occurred west of the Mississippi River during the Civil War had little, or nothing, to do with the final outcome. Perhaps, this is true. However, there is no denying that events in the Trans-Mississippi did have a profound effect on US History.

This presentation will review the key events in that theater with an eye toward their subsequent effects on the reunited country. Military campaigns, guerilla warfare, Native American conflict, foreign policy, and civilian suffering are among the topics to be reviewed.

It is hoped that the evening will be an interactive one with SCCWRT members expressing their opinions about the significance of the events in this often-overlooked theater of operations.

Ron Carlson has taught US History at the College of DuPage for 17 years, including many courses on different aspects, personalities, and engagements involved in the Civil War. He holds a B.S. from the Illinois Institute of Technology, an M.B.A. from Northwestern University, and an M.A. in History from the University of Illinois-Chicago. The Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable looks forward to the insights of this member and accomplished scholar.



FEBRUARY MEETING

BY

RICK BENSON

Forty-one members and guests of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable attended the February 6th presentation by Brian Seiter on, "Henry Hopkins Sibley, E.R.S. Canby, and the New Mexico Campaign of 1862.

Henry Hopkins Sibley was born in 1816 on a plantation in Louisiana. His father died when he was seven and the family was forced to sell the plantation and young Henry was raised by his grandfather in Missouri. When he reached his teen years, he originally attended Miami of Ohio University. However, his grandfather's connections got him an appointment to West Point as a member of the Class of 1837. His deficiencies in Math and Physics caused him to graduate with the Class of 1838. His career was fairly typical for a young officer of the time: garrison duty on the frontier, participation in the 2nd Seminole and Mexican Wars, marriage and family. From all this, he emerged a brevet Major with a reputation for being a dreamer, inventor, arguer, coward, gallant, and a philosophy which, simply stated, said, "Tomorrow will take care of itself". He also exhibited a frequent tendency to, "seek solace in the flowing bowl."

This unremarkable career was distinguished by one effort for which he is primarily remembered today. While serving in the West, he had come by a Comanche tepee. Impressed by its commodiousness, he and a partner developed a version for Army use which would sleep 20. It has been known ever since as the "Sibley" tent. When the Civil War came around, Sibley chose to join the Confederacy, probably because of his southern roots and the promise of more rapid advancement in the new army. As a result, the Army never paid him for his brainchild, while his partner received \$100,000.

When the war breaks out, Sibley goes first to El Paso and then to Richmond where he convinces Jefferson Davis to place him in command of an expedition to conquer New Mexico with an eye to securing the lands and goldfields of Colorado and California into the bargain. Davis sees this campaign as "low risk, high reward" and gives Sibley the go-ahead with a commission as Brigadier General. Gen. David Twiggs had surrendered the 19 forts in Texas and all their supplies and it is with these that Sibley feels he can achieve his objective.

On Feb. 21, 1862 Sibley marches north from El Paso with 15 pieces of artillery and 2,600 troops. His opponent is E.R.S. Canby, an officer whom Sibley had served under on several occasions in the pre-war army. Canby is holding a ten - building, twenty -two acre strongpoint called Fort Union with 3,600 troops. In order to be successful, Sibley must reduce this position. When the Confederates arrive, they cannot carry the fort by direct assault and do not have the time or supplies to conduct a siege. Sibley marches to a point of commanding ground over the fort and forces Canby to come out and fight. However, he puts one of his subordinates, Col. Tom Green in command, and spends most of the action in a wagon drinking with the officers wives. At one point, he attempted to mount his horse but nearly falls off and goes back to his amusement. The Confederates win the battle but are unable to take the fort and Canby refuses to surrender. Sibley decides to go north towards Santa Fe to secure supplies as he only has 5 days worth left.

Once through Santa Fe, the army goes on to a place called Pigeon Ranch where they are confronted by Col. John Slough and the 1st Colorado Volunteers who had just completed one of the wars' epic marches, more than 400 miles in 13 days! Also present is a contingent of New Mexico militia under Lt. Col. Andrew Chavez. The Battle of Glorieta Pass ends Sibley's dream. The Confederates win a tactical victory in the area of Pigeon Ranch,

but their supply train is destroyed and they have to retreat. They are subsequently chased from New Mexico and essentially destroyed by the united Union forces of Canby and Slough.

Sibley plays no further part in the war; afterwards, he dies in poverty at Fredericksburg, Va. in 1886. Canby is murdered by the Modoc Indians in 1873.

The SCCWRT thanks Brian Seiter for his very involving presentation on this little-known man and campaign.



PRESERVATION REPORT

BY

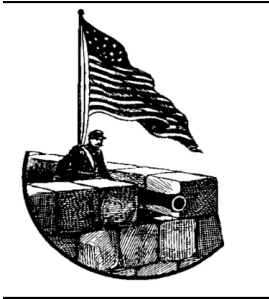
LEN OVERCASH SR

VA – From the start of the controversy over development in the Wilderness Battlefield area, Wal-Mart spokesmen have noted that the retailers proposed store site there has been zoned commercial for 20-plus years. Or has it? That's the question being asked by some people in Orange County.

The national coalition fighting Wal-Mart's proposed Super center near the entrance to Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park, is wondering the same thing: Does Wal-Mart need more than just a special-use permit for its 133,000 square-foot store?

John and Carla Bangs, residents of Monrovia, in western Orange, broached the issue Jan. 29 in an op-ed column in the Orange County Review. The Bangses, who oppose Wal-Mart's retail center and other

large-scale development proposed near this intersection of State Routes 3 and 20, suggested that provisions in Orange's zoning ordinance render the commercial zoning for the Wal-Mart tract, "null and void" ...
 Source: The Civil War Preservation Trust



ALL
 FOR
 THE
 UNION

It's dues time! Get them in (\$25 for E-mail, \$30 for snail) by the March 6 meeting and win a free 1 year membership if your name is drawn!

The Kankakee RT Seminar is upon us! Get your reservation in by March 14! The cost is \$50 for adults and \$25 for students. It will be held at the Quality Inn in Kankakee on 3/21. Speakers include: Leslie Goddard, Kenneth W. Noe, Lance J. Herdegen, and Dr. Craig Symonds. Call Art Schumacher 815-939-1041 with any questions.

Included with this newsletter is an article from the national publication *The Civil War News* about our own SCCWRT. Thanks to Rick Zarr for his very complete account of everyone's favorite Civil War organization!

EDITOR'S NOTES

The next board meeting will be at the Fairview Village private dining room on 3/31/09 at 7:30 PM. Call Jan at 630-830-7614 with any questions.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 3-Charley Banks-Lincoln Funeral Train

May 1-Len Overcash-45th Mississippi/3rd battalion.



THE SALT CREEK CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

www.saltcreekcwrt.org

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