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GENERAL JAMES HENRY CARLETON

By CLARENCE C. CLENDENEN*

It often happens that men whose influence on the history of a region or era has had a decisive effect, are overshadowed by more glamorous figures, or by more spectacular events than those in which they played a part. It sometimes happens, too, that the decisiveness of their actions creates toward them a hostility that causes them to be overlooked in favor of more popular persons, in later years.

Very few historical writers have given any attention to the operations of the powerful force of volunteers from California that crossed the desert of Southern California in the spring of 1862, and joined forces with the New Mexico and Colorado volunteers, on the Rio Grande. Fewer still know or have said anything about the man who organized, trained and commanded the California force, and who succeeded General E. R. S. Canby in command of the Department of New Mexico, in the summer of 1862. And yet, whether an historian is favorably disposed or not toward General James Henry Carleton, it must be admitted that his role in the history of the Southwest was important.

In the summer of 1861, with the Union torn apart, Confederate forces from Texas seized and occupied the posts of western Texas, and in the Rio Grande Valley, in New Mexico. At the same time, Confederate sympathizers in California were openly parading their sympathies, and it was feared that there might even be an uprising in Southern California, where the greater part of the American population was of Southern origin.

To uphold the authority of the Federal government in Los Angeles, early in the summer of 1861, Brevet Major James Henry Carleton, commanding officer of the post of Fort Tejon, was ordered to Los Angeles with two small companies of the 1st Dragoons.¹ In Los Angeles it speedily be-

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1. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Series I, Vol. 50, Part 1. Washington: The Government Printing Office. 1897. p. 476. Hereafter referred to as *Official Records*.

came known that Major Carleton would stand for no nonsense from Confederate sympathizers. Before the arrival of the dragoons Unionist sympathizers had found it expedient to speak softly, and to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Within a few days after Carleton's arrival, however, it was possible to stage a Fourth of July parade in honor of the Union. Following the parade, there were patriotic airs by the band of the 1st Dragoons, and speeches by Major Carleton and by Captain Winfield Scott Hancock, whose life had been threatened only a short time before.²

This was the first introduction of the citizens of California to the man who was destined, in the next few months, to organize and lead an expedition of Californians to the Rio Grande, and who would, following that, be the responsible commander in three bitter years of war against the Apaches and Navahos, and be the central figure in a scarcely less bitter controversy with various politicians and public men of the Territory of New Mexico.

Major General James Henry Carleton was born at Lubec, Maine, on December 27, 1814, during the second war with England. At the time of his birth, his parents were refugees from Moose Island, Eastport, Maine, which had been seized by the British. All of the inhabitants of the island who had refused to take the oath of allegiance to the British crown had been compelled to leave.

Practically nothing is known of his boyhood, his education or his early training. It is most probable that his parents were in comfortable circumstances, although that is purely a conjecture. His boyhood life was like that of other boys of the time in the semi-frontier State of Maine. In the summers he swam, fished, played Indian in the woods. In the winters he attended school, hunted, skated, helped with the chores and participated in snow fights with the other boys. Apparently he never attended college, but his correspondence and his published articles display an ease of expression and an erudition that prove thorough training. His correspondence with Colonel Joseph Rodman West, during the Civil War,

2. Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, p. 296. By kind permission of Mr. Marco Newmark.

proves that he possessed some familiarity with Greek—an accomplishment which was considered the hallmark of an educated man of the time.³ Certain items of his published works would seem to indicate considerable knowledge of Spanish, but this language could, of course, have been acquired during his long service on the southwestern frontier.

The first definite glimpse of James Henry Carleton is found in the records of the Adjutant General of Maine, which show that he was commissioned as a lieutenant of the Maine Militia, on August 20, 1838.⁴ Since the militia of those days met only once a year for training, and always made their training day somewhat of a convivial occasion, it is doubtful that the new lieutenant had much opportunity for improving his military knowledge before something serious was afoot. It is safe to assume, however, that he had devoted himself to the study of "tactics" (as drill was then called), and had made himself as competent a soldier as the limited military resources of Maine would permit.

Something serious was afoot very soon. In the following winter the ancient boundary dispute between Great Britain and the United States over ownership of the Aroostook Valley became acute when the authorities of Maine and New Brunswick began to apprehend and hold interlopers into their respective claims. A century later it is easy to smile at the "Aroostook War," in which the total casualty list is said to have been one horse, but at the time the situation was both critical and dangerous.

Governor Fairfield, of Maine, ordered the militia into the disputed area. At the time, Carleton was the lieutenant of the Stillwater company. For one reason or another, most of the senior officers of the battalion, to which the Stillwater company belonged, were unable to respond to the Governor's call. February is not the most clement month of the year in Maine, and as the militiamen struggled northward through the woods, the remaining officer who was senior to Carleton

3. *Official Records*, p. 698. I am indebted to the National Archives for a photostatic copy of this letter.

4. From an official Certificate of Commission, kindly furnished by Brigadier General George Carter, The Adjutant General of Maine.

became ill, and the command of the entire battalion devolved upon him.⁵

No one really wanted a war. General Winfield Scott hurried northward from Washington, and he and Sir John Harvey, the Governor of New Brunswick speedily effected an agreement that eased the tension until the two governments could solve the dispute. Under this agreement, the forces of both sides withdrew from the disputed area, except for enough men to guard the stores which had to be left behind. Lieutenant Carleton's company was selected for this duty, and remained under arms until May, 1839, when as the last of the expeditionary force of the "Pork and Beans War," they marched on foot to Bangor, and were mustered out of the service.⁶

There is no direct evidence that young Lieutenant Carleton came to General Scott's attention, but it is not at all unlikely that he did. Within a short time he received an invitation from Joel Poinsett, the Secretary of War, to come to Washington for examination for a commission in the Regular Army. He passed the examination satisfactorily, and on the last day of November, 1839, he was honorably discharged from the Maine Militia, and departed for his first station and duty—the Cavalry School of Practice, at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

The Commandant of the Cavalry School of Practice was Captain Edwin Vose Sumner, an officer of the 1st Dragoons, the regiment to which Carleton was assigned. There appears to have been no definitely prescribed curriculum, and no specific period of instruction. For a year and a half Carleton trained under the eye of Sumner, who was known as a thorough soldier and a strict disciplinarian.

By March, 1841, Sumner evidently decided that the new lieutenant was ready for duty with troops. Late in that

5. From an unpublished report made by James Henry Carleton to The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C., some time in 1863. I am indebted to Colonel Thomas Spaulding, U. S. Army, Retired, for informing me of the existence of this report. A manuscript copy, which he prepared, is in the Stephen Spaulding Memorial Collection, in the Library of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Hereafter referred to as James Henry Carleton, *Report of 1863*.

6. *Ibid.*

month Carleton left Carlisle for Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, in command of a hundred recruits. From Carlisle the command marched overland to Baltimore, and there took ship for New Orleans. From New Orleans they went by steamboat as far as practicable, and marched the remainder of the long distance to Fort Gibson. There Carleton finally joined the regiment and the company to which he would belong for years to come. His company commander was Captain Burgwin, a noted frontier soldier, who was destined to die in battle at Taos, New Mexico.

Almost his first duty at Fort Gibson was to serve as Post Adjutant. This duty lasted for several months, and then, with his company, he marched northward. He was detailed as an Acting Assistant Quartermaster, and in this capacity he constructed Fort Croghan, where Council Bluffs, Iowa, now stands. On the abandonment of Fort Croghan, only a few months later, it fell to Lieutenant Carleton's lot, as Acting Assistant Quartermaster, to build "Mackinack Boats," and transport all of the government property and supplies down the river to Fort Leavenworth. A lieutenant of United States Dragoons, in the middle of the 19th Century, was necessarily a versatile person!

During the slow journey downstream he met and became friendly with Audubon, who has left a glimpse in his *Missouri River Journals*. Audubon's boat and Carleton's convoy moved close together throughout the voyage. Carleton and Audubon frequently ate together, and they were both addicted to whist. They traded knives (this seems to have been a frontier custom). Carleton presented Audubon with a bear skin and a set of elk horns, and Audubon, in return, gave him one of his drawings. Finally, on October 11, 1843, Audubon recorded that upon his departure from Fort Leavenworth, "Lieutenant Carleton came to see me off, and we parted reluctantly."⁷

Within a few weeks after his arrival at Fort Leavenworth from Fort Croghan, Carleton found himself in serious trouble. A full year before, at Fort Gibson, he had become

7. From the "Missouri River Journals," in Maria R. Audubon, *Audubon and His Journals* (New York, 1897), II, 172-173.

quite friendly with Lieutenant Wickliffe of his own regiment, the 1st Dragoons. Early in December, 1842, Wickliffe shot and killed a squatter, living near the post. He was duly ordered into arrest by Lieutenant Colonel Richard Mason, the Post Commander, but shortly afterward he broke his arrest and disappeared. A year later Colonel Mason suddenly preferred charges against Carleton, who had been Post Adjutant at the time of Wickliffe's disappearance. Mason accused Carleton of having deliberately falsified the morning report so that Wickliffe's absence was not discovered until he was safely away. Mason piled on other charges, until it appeared that Carleton was a scoundrel who was unfit to associate with officers and gentlemen.

A General Court-martial, the highest form of military court, duly met at Fort Gibson, shortly before Christmas, 1843, and pondered the evidence for several weeks. Carleton's defense was a categorical denial of all of the specifications, and an accusation that Mason was motivated by spite and the necessity for finding a "goat." The charges were such that conviction made dismissal from the service mandatory—no other sentence was legally permissible. Nevertheless, the court, after finding Carleton guilty and sentencing him to be dismissed from the service, appended to the record of the trial a strong recommendation for clemency!⁸

It would seem that there was more to the case than appeared openly in the record of the trial, and evidently the President of the United States was of the same opinion, for John Tyler commuted the sentence to the purely nominal one of suspension from command for six months without pay. A slap on the wrist, by way of punishment!

The life of the Army on the frontier was far from sedentary or inactive. There was too much to do and too much territory to cover for the scanty forces ever to stagnate or grow stale. In the late summer of 1844 an expedition moved westward from Fort Leavenworth to explore the almost unknown country to the northwest. The expedition, composed of several companies of the 1st Dragoons, was commanded by

8. From the official record of the court martial, furnished by the National Archives, by permission of The Judge Advocate General of the Army.

Major Clifton Wharton, of that regiment, and Carleton was designated as Commissary for the expedition.

Although the expedition was prepared for action at a minute's notice, its primary purposes were exploration, and to demonstrate to the Indian tribes the white man's power. Major Wharton, as commanding officer, kept a careful journal, and several other officers, including Carleton, did likewise. In fact, each camp must have been the scene of a great deal of literary activity, as the officers noted down the activities and observations of the day.⁹

The following spring, a second expedition moved out from Fort Leavenworth for the West. This time it comprised almost the entire regiment of the 1st Dragoons, and was commanded in person by Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny, the regimental commander, who had been relieved from command of a department to enable him to command the expedition. The mission was somewhat more ambitious than that of the first expedition, and was to cross the entire width of the Great Plains to the Rocky Mountains, which were almost as little known in 1845 as the mountains of central Asia are today. For three months the column marched across territory which had been seen before by very few white men, and across which a body of troops had never marched before. There were no battles (none were expected), but the troops marched ready for instant combat, and there were endless pow-wows with the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Comanches.

Again, Carleton, who had been promoted to first lieutenant in the meantime, kept a careful journal, recording all of the incidents of the march, and making notes on all the phenomena he observed. He made a collection of mineralogical and geological specimens, which he later forwarded to Harvard University, and for which he received a vote of thanks from the University.¹⁰

For several years the situation between the United States and Mexico had been growing tense, and in the early summer

9. James Henry Carleton, *The Prairie Logbooks*, published by the Caxton Club, Chicago, in 1943, and cited by permission of the Club.

10. James Henry Carleton, *Report of 1863*.

of 1846 Carleton's company of the 1st Dragoons marched to San Antonio, Texas, where the "Central Column" was being formed under the command of Brigadier General Wool, for the impending war. Shortly after arrival at San Antonio, Carleton was detailed as an aide-de-camp to General Wool, and as a member of General Wool's staff he crossed the Rio Grande when war finally broke out.

In the early part of the 19th Century a general's aides-de-camp were his eyes and ears. They carried his messages over the battlefield, and frequently were sent to make observations at places where the general could not go himself. At the Battle of Buena Vista it was Carleton who was sent to reconnoiter a practicable route by which the cavalry could reach the Mexican position, and later in the day he commanded a company of his own regiment, the 1st Dragoons, in a desperate charge. His conspicuous conduct resulted, some time later, in his being brevetted to the grade of major for "gallant and meritorious services" in the battle.¹¹

Immediately after the close of the campaign in northern Mexico Carleton was ordered to Scott's army, which was approaching the City of Mexico from Vera Cruz. While en route to join, however, he was taken seriously ill, so instead of being in the final campaign of the war, he was ordered to Washington, where he spent the next several months convalescing. This was not time wasted, however, for he spent his enforced leisure in writing a *History of the Battle of Buena Vista, with the Operations of the Army of Occupation for Thirty Days*. It was published by Harper Brothers in 1848, and still remains one of the best accounts of the battle, and is practically the only one written by an actual participant.¹²

During the war he had been promoted to the substantive rank of captain, and the autumn of 1848 found him fully recovered, and finally in command of his own company. (Before World War I a captain usually remained assigned to a single company, as long as he held the rank of captain.) His

11. *Ibid.*

12. Miss Elizabeth Perkins, of Baltimore, Maryland, who is a grandniece of James Henry Carleton, kindly loaned me her personal copy of *The Battle of Buena Vista*. It was a present from Carleton to his sister, and bears his autograph.

new company was at Carlisle Barracks, and Carleton repeated his first long journey, going by sea to New Orleans, thence up the Mississippi and Missouri to Fort Leavenworth, where the 1st Dragoons were then stationed.

By the winter of 1850 the tide of migration to California had swelled to tremendous proportions, with migrants clamoring for information on the safest and easiest ways to reach the land of gold. Fort Leavenworth was the crossroad of the continent during this period, and Carleton carefully collected and collated all available information on routes to the west. On February 1, 1850, he addressed a lengthy letter to the editors of the *Intelligencer*, saying, "The importance of knowing each morning where the next halting place for the night is to be, is very great, even when one's journey lies through a settled country; it is greater still on the wide prairies, where seldom the traveler is met who can impart the necessary information in this respect."¹³ Following this introductory sentence was information on all of the known routes to California, as complete as interrogation of scores of people could make it.

Carleton's stay at Fort Leavenworth was of relatively short duration. In 1851 the greater part of the 1st Dragoons, now commanded by Carleton's old mentor at the Cavalry School of Application, Edwin Vose Sumner, moved to the newly conquered territory of New Mexico.

New Mexico had been part of the Union for only four years. The Mexican war had seen the country invaded by the hated *gringo*, and there had been a frantic rebellion against the newcomers. The rebellion had been ruthlessly suppressed, and Carleton's old company commander, Captain Burgwin, had been killed in the storming of Taos. The people were still sullen, and a constant display of force was considered necessary to remind them of the danger of resisting the new regime. In addition, the bands of Apaches and Navahos raided settlements industriously, making life a hazard for people in outlying settlements and ranches. Continual movement was the order of the day for the Army, and in Carle-

13. Reprinted in Stryker's *American Register and Magazine*, July, 1850 (Vol. 4), pp. 246-252. The Ayer Collection of Americana, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

ton's own words, he "engaged in many campaigns and scouts; among the *latter was one for the exploration of the ruins of Gran Quivira.*"

The expedition to Gran Quivira appears to have been primarily for scientific purposes, and was made just before Christmas, 1853. The weather was bitter, and the march was attended by discomfort that was little short of hardship. Carleton's report of the expedition, and his conclusions (logical, even though later proven erroneous) that the ruins were of Christian origin, were published in the *Ninth Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution.*

Although he had been on the frontier for the greater part of thirteen years by this time, his New England mind was still unreconciled to the squalor of the Mexican villages and the unorthodox ways of the natives. Referring, in his report, to a village through which the expedition marched twice on its wintry march, he said, "From what we have observed during our second visit to this place, this Botany Bay of New Mexico, we have concluded that our former estimate of the inhabitants was premature and ill-judged; we now believe that there is not one single redeeming trait of disposition or habits to be found within its borders."¹⁴

Needless to say, there was neither parcel post nor railway express to New Mexico in the middle decade of the last century, nor were the few merchants able to satisfy the wants of the Americans in the territory. Carleton maintained a long correspondence with the Boston jewelry firm of Bigelow Brothers and Kennard, who evidently acted as his agents in "the States."¹⁵ His chatty correspondence with the firm not only reveals something of his personal affairs, but gives a vivid picture of the life of an officer on the far frontier. The dragoons moved out from their posts on brief notice, and usually not knowing how long it would be before they would return. Mention was made of a fight with Apaches by one company of dragoons, in which twenty-three men were killed and twenty-three wounded, out of a total of sixty present in

14. *Ninth Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution*, pp. 296-316.

15. For a complete microfilm of this correspondence I am indebted to the Baker Library, Harvard University School of Business Administration.

the fight. Carleton's own company was in pursuit of Jicarilla Apaches for seventy-six consecutive days, finally surprising them on the fourth of June, on the summit of Fischer's Peak. Although Bigelow Brothers and Kennard were in the jewelry business, they accepted from Carleton a commission to obtain a fine, black beaver hat for Kit Carson, with whom Carleton had laid (and lost) a wager as to the time when the Indians would be overtaken.

Carleton's correspondence with the Boston firm continued until the summer of 1856, when he was suddenly ordered to Washington for duty. For almost a year he was engaged in the study of the reports which Captain George B. McClellan had made upon his observations in Europe. Carleton's duty was to analyze the reports to determine what European cavalry practices could be adapted to the American service.

This must have been a pleasant duty, after the severe service on the frontier, but it ended when General Scott sent him in command of some three or four hundred recruits, across the Great Plains to New Mexico. Carleton's service in New Mexico this time, however, was brief, and immediately afterward, he spent almost a year in Virginia, recruiting for his own regiment, the 1st Dragoons. And that, except for a brief visit or so, was destined to be his last service east of the Rocky Mountains.

During Carleton's tour of duty in the East, the 1st Dragoons had been transferred from New Mexico to the Pacific Coast, and he rejoined his company in the autumn of 1858, at Fort Tejon, California.

Pacific Coast service did not mean sitting quietly in garrison, any more than did service in New Mexico. Within a short time after his arrival at Fort Tejon, he was detailed to escort the funds for the payment of the Army in Utah, and was given the additional mission of burying the victims of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and of conducting an investigation of the circumstances surrounding that tragedy. His investigation was painstaking and thorough. It was conducted with some difficulty, for two years had elapsed since the massacre, and the evidence was both stale and conflicting.

In his conclusions, however; he left no doubt that he believed that the massacre was perpetrated by the whites of Utah, aided by a few Indians. "I observed that nearly every skull I saw had been shot through with rifle or revolver bullets."

Under his direction the dragoons erected a monument over the bones they collected, and surmounted it with a rude cross, upon which was carved, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."¹⁶

The next two years must have been a restful interlude, after the almost continual movement and excitement of the preceding few years. The Indians of California were relatively docile, and were unwarlike in the extreme. Doubtless there were small scouting expeditions, but no record of such has been preserved. In the "States" people were increasingly preoccupied with the dispute between North and South, but there is no indication that Carleton took any particular interest in the controversy. He did not share the popular New England prejudice against slaveholders; in fact, he had owned at least one slave, and probably more, and his *Prairie Logbooks* included numerous casual references to slaves belonging to officers of the regiment—references indicating that he regarded slavery as something to be taken for granted.

But the breaking of the storm in the spring of 1861 soon affected even the placid backwater of Fort Tejon. As mentioned earlier in this paper, Carleton and the two pitifully small companies of dragoons from Fort Tejon were soon ordered to Los Angeles, to overawe the outspoken Southern sympathizers of that rather somnolent Southern and Mexican pueblo.

Carleton himself was not long in Los Angeles. Within a few days after the Fourth of July celebration in honor of the Union, he received secret orders from the Department Commander, who was his old instructor and regimental commander, Edwin Vose Sumner, now a brigadier general, to go to San Bernardino, in civilian clothes, and without reveal-

16. Document No. 605, House of Representatives, 57th Congress, 1st Session, *Special Report of the Mountain Meadow Massacre*, by J. H. Carleton, Brevet Major, United States Army, Captain, First Dragoons.

ing his identity, to investigate and report upon disturbing information which had been received from that place.¹⁷

He spent several days conducting his investigation, and had barely settled himself again at his camp near Los Angeles, when abrupt orders required him to turn over his command to the next ranking officer, and hasten to San Francisco. The order informed him briefly that he was to command a force destined for service on the Plains.

During that exciting summer of 1861 the Regular Army garrisons were withdrawn from the posts of the Far West, and by the middle of the summer the problem of safeguarding the Overland Mail route had become acute. Consequently, in August of that year, the Governor of California was requested by the Secretary of War to enroll a regiment of volunteer infantry and a reduced regiment of cavalry, to be moved to Nevada and Utah at once, to guarantee the continued movement of the mail. The requisition specified that the command of the infantry regiment was to be given to Brevet Major James Henry Carleton, and stated positively that nobody else would be allowed to command it.

It is altogether beyond the scope of this paper to trace the various steps by which the force destined for service on the northern plains found itself scattered through Southern California at the close of 1861, reenforced by volunteer regiments raised subsequent to the first requisition for California troops. It happened, however, that Carleton's force was ideally located when the new Department Commander, Brigadier General George Wright, decided that the troops at his disposal could best be used to reopen the southern mail route, instead of waiting for the melting of the snows in the Sierras to make the movement onto the northern route practicable.

In this day of paved roads, air lines, radio communication and radar detection, it is difficult to visualize, even for the most imaginative, the difficulties that faced a military expedition in the Southwest ninety years ago. California furnished almost nothing in the way of manufactured goods.

17. *Official Records*, p. 538.

The best roads were mere tracks. From the Coast to the Rio Grande the only water, except for the oasis around Tucson, was the scanty trickle in the widely spaced wells that had been dug for the Butterfield stage line. All food, all supplies and all equipment for a force moving into Arizona and New Mexico must be carried with the force. Before any move could be made in strength, it was necessary to accumulate enormous quantities of hay, barley, flour, clothing, ammunition and medicine. And the mere accumulation was only the beginning. These articles must be transported, and the transportation required wagons, mules, horses, harness, horse-shoes, horseshoe nails, blacksmith's equipment, and a thousand and one items that would scarcely occur to the layman.

It must be remembered that at the outbreak of the Civil War no commander had a trained technical staff, to which he could delegate working out the details of a plan. Every item of Carleton's plans for carrying out his mission had to be determined by himself for the simple reason that there was nobody else in his command who was qualified to do it. Nevertheless, his initial plan and his first requisition for the necessary supplies and equipment were submitted to the Department Commander within a few days after he first received his orders—and the plan and the requisition will still strike a military student as being complete down to the minutest of details. At his headquarters in Los Angeles he must have worked day and night, without rest or cessation.

Nor were planning and supply the only problems Carleton had to solve. The rigorous training he imposed upon the troops produced discontent, resulting shortly in open mutiny by one company, and rumblings in others. The situation was charged with serious danger, and had Carleton been an unfeeling martinet there would have been trouble. However, his long service and association with frontiersmen and soldiers enabled him to gauge the situation clearly, and a few quiet words of explanation, joined with an appeal to the men's patriotism, quickly calmed the trouble. There was constant friction with the pro-Secessionist population of Southern California, resulting in attempts to blacken Carleton's

reputation, even to the point of rumors insinuating that he was secretly a Confederate sympathizer! Unprecedented rains in the winter of 1861-62 turned Southern California into a quagmire, abruptly interrupting all preparations for several weeks.

Not the least difficult of the problems which he had to solve was that of obtaining information as to what was transpiring on the other side of the Arizona desert. Very little was known about the desert itself, and it interposed an effective screen between California and information about Confederate forces and activities to the eastward. How effectively Carleton solved this particular problem may be judged by the fact that his agents obtained information as to the Confederate force and activities at Tucson from the Confederate commander himself!

With preparations complete, and the country finally dry enough for the movement of troops and wagons, the expedition got under way in April, 1862. Carleton had hoped to surprise and capture the small Confederate force at Tucson, but one of his most trusted officers rode blindly into a trap and was captured. With all hope of surprise lost, the force moved across the Colorado, and plodded into the Arizona desert. Following an unprecedented rainy season, the spring and early summer of 1862 were the hottest on record up to that time. Men and animals suffered acutely from the heat and alkali dust, and their thirst reached such proportions that they were willing to drink water from a well from which the fragments of a murdered man had been fished!¹⁸ There was a minor skirmish a few days after leaving Fort Yuma, and there was a savage little fight in Picacho Pass, but early in June, 1862, the Column from California entered and occupied Tucson without opposition.

The march across the desert had taken over a month. Supplies were exhausted and wagons had shrunk in the dry heat. A period of rest, reorganization and further accumulation of supplies was necessary before the long move to the Rio Grande could be undertaken.

18. James Henry Carleton, *Report of 1863*.

The next few weeks in Tucson were busy ones. Almost the first act as the advance elements of the Column moved into Tucson was to round up and arrest the desperados and the known and suspected Confederate sympathizers, and deport them to Fort Yuma. Since the Confederates had been in occupation of Tucson for months, nearly all of the few Americans who had remained were suspected, probably with justification, of being pro-Confederate.

Among those arrested was former Lieutenant Sylvester Mowry, a northern-born graduate of West Point, who had resigned from the Army several years previously, to own and operate the Patagonia Mine. This arrest produced repercussions which finally reached the Senate (and died there), and for the remainder of his life Mowry fulminated against Carleton, charging him with all sorts of crimes. As a matter of fact the controversy over Mowry's arrest occasionally is heard to this day, but the fact remains that Mowry, in spite of his northern birth, had been active at the Charleston Convention, which had nominated Breckenridge as the candidate of the pro-slavery wing of the Democratic Party, and had been friendly with the Confederates when the latter occupied Arizona.

The vaguely defined area which was called Arizona had, before the Civil War, been included in the Territory of New Mexico. It was, however, so remote from the seat of the territorial government that for all practical purposes it was entirely without government of any kind. No civil officials had ever been appointed, nor had any courts ever sat at a point nearer than Mesilla. Within a few days after the occupation of Tucson, Carleton issued a brief proclamation, announcing the establishment of a military government for the territory. With himself as Military Governor, he named necessary territorial officials, prescribed the establishment of military courts, in lieu of the non-existent civil courts, and prescribed necessary rules and regulations for the government. Carleton's provisional military government, which was intended to exist only until such time as a legal civil government could be established, was the first organized gov-

ernment in what is now the State of Arizona. He introduced law and order in an area where law and order had never been known before.

Various bands of the Apaches had been sporadically at war with the whites for several years before the Civil War. However, during the march across Arizona there had been no hostile encounters with the Indians, and Carleton hoped earnestly that peace with the Apaches might be maintained. Consequently he issued, while at Tucson, strict orders that Indians should not be fired upon, except in self defense, and every effort was made to gain the confidence of the Indians. He reported to higher headquarters that he hoped to induce the principal chiefs of the Apaches to come to Fort Stanford (old Fort Breckenridge, which had been reoccupied, and renamed in honor of the Governor of California) for a conference, and to receive presents. Ironically enough, almost at the exact moment when he was writing this report, Apaches were killing two messengers whom he had despatched with messages for General Canby, in New Mexico. A few days later, the first detail of the Column from California was approached in the Apache Pass by a group of Indians bearing a white flag. When the powwow was finished, it was discovered that two soldiers were missing, and a little later, their mutilated bodies were found in a nearby ravine. The next detachment, escorting supplies, was suddenly attacked on the same spot by overwhelming numbers of Indians, and only the fortunate fact that they had two small mountain howitzers (a weapon with which the Apache was totally unfamiliar) prevented disaster.

Incidentally, the Apaches seem to have regarded it as extremely unfair that the soldiers "fired wagons at us!"

Carleton, who had received his promotion to the grade of brigadier general shortly before, did not know of these incidents until he reached Apache Pass himself, and saw the graves of his men. From that moment on, for the next twenty years, there was almost continuous war between the whites and Chiricahua Apaches. However, at the time it was impossible to divert any of the units of the Column from California from their main mission, and the troops were pushed

on toward the Rio Grande. The only diversion was to send wagon loads of supplies, with a strong escort, to the Pinos Altos Mines, where it was reported that the people were so closely invested by Apaches as to be in actual danger of starvation.

The leading echelon of the Column, under the immediate command of Major E. E. Eyre, 1st California Cavalry, reached the Rio Grande on the Fourth of July, and hoisted the national colors over the ruins of Fort Thorn. The remainder of the Column closed on the Rio Grande in the latter part of the month, with men and animals thin and tired, but unbelievably toughened by their long march. The Confederates, badly mauled several weeks before by Colorado and New Mexico forces, under the command of General Canby, had made haste to retreat to Texas, upon learning that a Federal force from California was about to cut them off from Texas. Consequently, after arriving at the Rio Grande, there was nothing for the Californians to do, in the way of fighting Confederates, except to gather in numbers of prisoners, and reoccupy the posts that had been lost to the Union a year before.

Within a few days after his arrival in New Mexico, Carleton received sudden orders, summoning him to Santa Fe, to relieve General E. R. S. Canby in command of the Department of New Mexico. Canby had received orders transferring him to the seat of war in the East, and lost no time in turning over his command of New Mexico as soon as Carleton became available to replace him.

With Carleton's assumption of the command in New Mexico, the Column from California was merged with the other troops in the Department of New Mexico, and ceased to exist as a separate military entity, although the returns of the California troops were still rendered to the commanding general of the Department of the Pacific.

The new commander of the Department of New Mexico found himself faced with serious problems. The war in the Valley of the Rio Grande had not been long, nor were large forces involved, but it had been fought with savagery and vindictiveness. The country had been ravaged by the Con-

federates in their retreat to Texas, and was in a condition close to anarchy.

Carleton bore down sharply upon known sympathizers with the Confederacy, required the Mexican population to clean up their towns and pueblos, and gave open encouragement to farmers and traders. In order to effect a measure of control over the movement of persons whose activities might be questionable, he instituted an iron-clad system of passes, from which he allowed no exceptions. The majority of the population took this latter measure as a matter of course, but it produced great indignation among officials who fancied that they should be exempt from and superior to orders of any military commander, even in time of war. There is no evidence, however, that even the direst threats of political officeholders caused the quiet Maine Yankee to vary in the slightest degree from his decided course of action.

The most serious problem which confronted the new Department Commander lay in the two Indian wars which were going on simultaneously. The Apaches made life a hazard for everyone, except in the larger towns, and the Navahos were scarcely less dangerous. Vigorous and continuous campaigns were started at once against both tribes. Against the Apaches the results were not spectacular, and the wars against the Apaches were destined to last for about twenty years more. Within a year, however, it was again possible for settlers to move into the valleys, and for prospectors to search through the mountains.

Against the Navahos, the results were decisive and permanent. A force under the immediate command of Carleton's old friend and guide, Kit Carson, penetrated into the Navaho country in the dead of winter, and pushed entirely through Cañon de Chelly, which the Navahos had believed was impregnable. The greater part of the tribe surrendered, and were transferred to a reservation established in the valley of the Pecos River, where it was planned and hoped that they would be enabled to support themselves by agriculture.

The transfer of an entire tribe to new lands, beyond the limits of their ancestral homes, may strike a modern as being unduly drastic, but it should be remembered that the trans-

fer of Indians to reservations where they could, it was hoped, be taught the arts of peace, and made self-supporting, was the recognized policy of the time. Efforts were made to provide irrigation water by building a dam across the Pecos, and the labor of the California volunteers was freely used in attempting to make Bosque Redondo habitable for the exiled Navahos. "Carleton made heroic efforts to meet the situation, and his disgruntled soldiers worked like Trojans."¹⁹

But work as they might, Bosque Redondo could not be made habitable for the number of people concentrated there, and in due course of time the Navahos were permitted to return to their own country. From that day to this, they have remained a peaceful people.

At the close of the Civil War, James Henry Carleton was brevetted to the grade of major general, and promoted to the substantive grade of colonel. He was assigned to command the 4th Cavalry, but it appears that during the few remaining years of his life, he actually spent little time in active command of his regiment. After a short visit to his old home in Maine, for the first time in many years, he contracted pneumonia, and died at San Antonio, Texas, in 1873.

During his lifetime James Henry Carleton was a controversial figure, and to this day he remains one. A strong and positive character always make enemies, especially when he is in a position of responsibility and authority, and Carleton was no exception to this rule. No strong character is ever deterred from his course by criticism, and Carleton never once gave the slightest heed to the chorus of recrimination that was raised against him. He followed the course of action that seemed to him to be the best, and without regard to what might be said by personal enemies or by those who thought that they knew the problems of the Civil and Indian wars in the Southwest better than he did.

Among the Union generals of the Civil War he is relatively unknown, because of the isolated theater in which he served and because he fought no major battles. If he had

19. Charles Amsden, "The Navajo Exile at Bosque Redondo," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 8 (January, 1933), p. 44. By permission of the New Mexico Historical Society.

served in the better known campaigns in the East, there can be no doubt that he would have left a name far more famous than it is. His organization, planning and management of the movement of a large force from California prove military ability of the highest order. It is the considered opinion of the writer of this paper that James Henry Carleton was an outstanding soldier and a great commander.