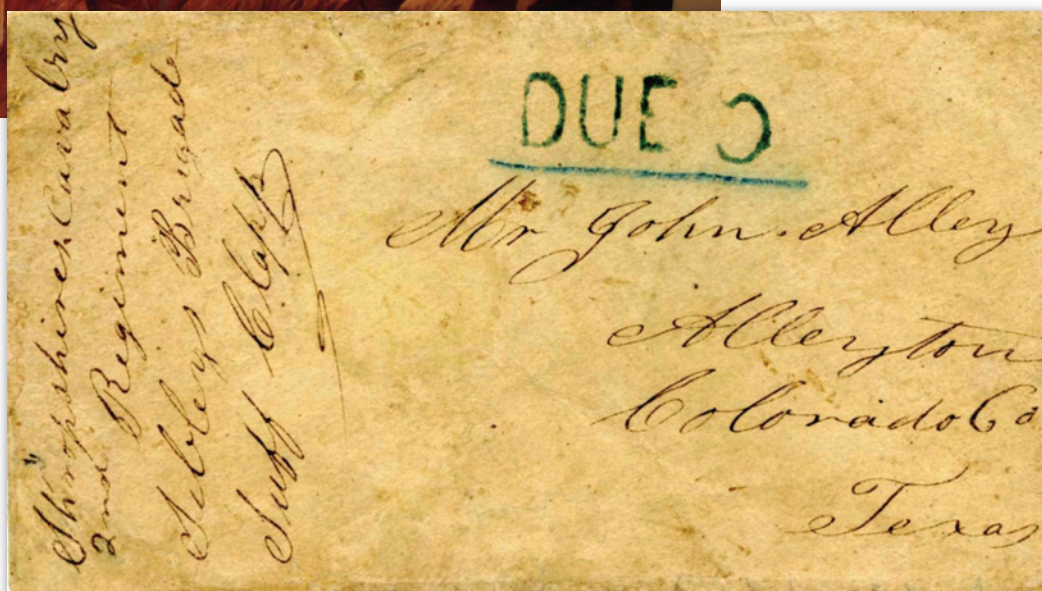




Painting: *The Battle of Glorieta Pass*—Pecos National Historical Park—According to online note on Wikipedia. This image is in the public domain because its copyright has expired in the United States and those countries with a copyright term of no more than the life of the author plus 100 years.

Figure 1.



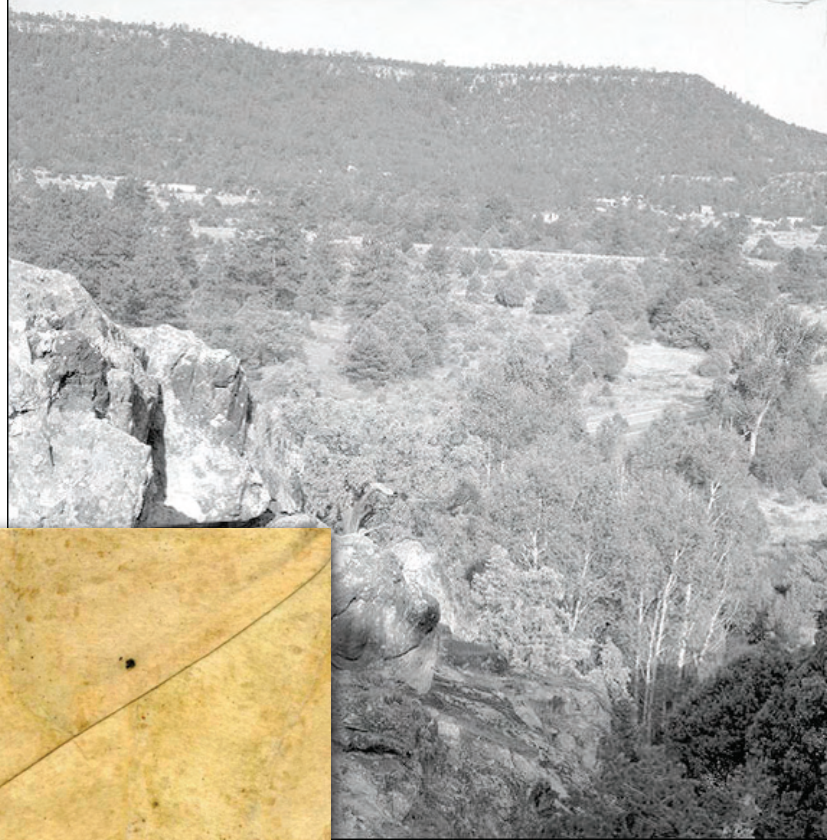
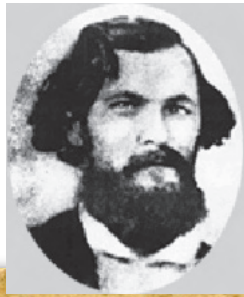
Fort Stockton, Texas— *in transit to destiny* at **Glorieta Pass**

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

The illustrated cover shown in Figure 1 is franked with the only recorded Confederate stampless marking from Fort Stockton, Texas, and will be listed for the first time in the forthcoming CSA Catalog circa 2011. On the back flaps (Figure 2) is a blue Fort Stockton circular date stamp which matches the DUE 5 handstamp on the face. As mandated, the envelope was endorsed with the soldier's name and military unit "Shropshires Cavalry / 2nd Regiment / Sibley's Brigade / Suff Clapp" and addressed to Mr. John Alley of Alleyton, Colorado County, Texas.

For those with knowledge of Southwest military history, this penned endorsement evokes powerful visions of the first year of the Civil War when a few thousand volunteers traveled 1,200 miles from San Antonio, Texas, to Glorieta, New Mexico, hoping to capture the Southwestern territory for the Confederacy.
Suffield Clapp, Private, Company A, 5th Texas Cavalry

John Samuel Shropshire,
Major, Company A,
5th Texas Cavalry



1990 black and white photo of
Glorieta Pass terrain.



Figure 2.

A biography of Suffield Clapp is found in Volume 3 of *A History of Texas and Texans* by Francis White Johnson and Ernest William Winkler. "Suff", as he was called, was born in Guilford County, North Carolina in 1838 to a slave holding family. The family moved to Tennessee the year after Suff was born and there grew corn and tobacco until they moved again to Colorado County, Texas in 1850. Suff and five of his brothers all had service in the Confederate army.

In April 1861, Clapp enlisted in Company A of the Fifth Texas Cavalry, under Col. Tom Green (later General). From then until the end of the war, Clapp was in active service except when a prisoner or in the hospital. He enlisted at Columbus, Texas, and first saw service in New Mexico. There he was at Santa Fe and in the Battle of Valverde. In the latter conflict, he was shot through both thighs and in the hospital for two months.

In the letters of his company commander was found this report:

*Camp Lockridge —
2 miles above Socora New Mexico —
Feb 27th 1862*

Tell the Dr or Mr Delany to publish in the county the report I have enclosed so that the various friends may know what has become of us. (Author's note: there many soldiers and wounds listed, including...)

Suffield Clapp, shot through both thighs, no bones broken, improving.

The above is a correct statement of the condition of the men of Co. A. The number of the wounded will show what the men had to under go & how well they sustained themselves. No man ever led a better & braver company than I had the hon[or] to command in the battle of Valverde.

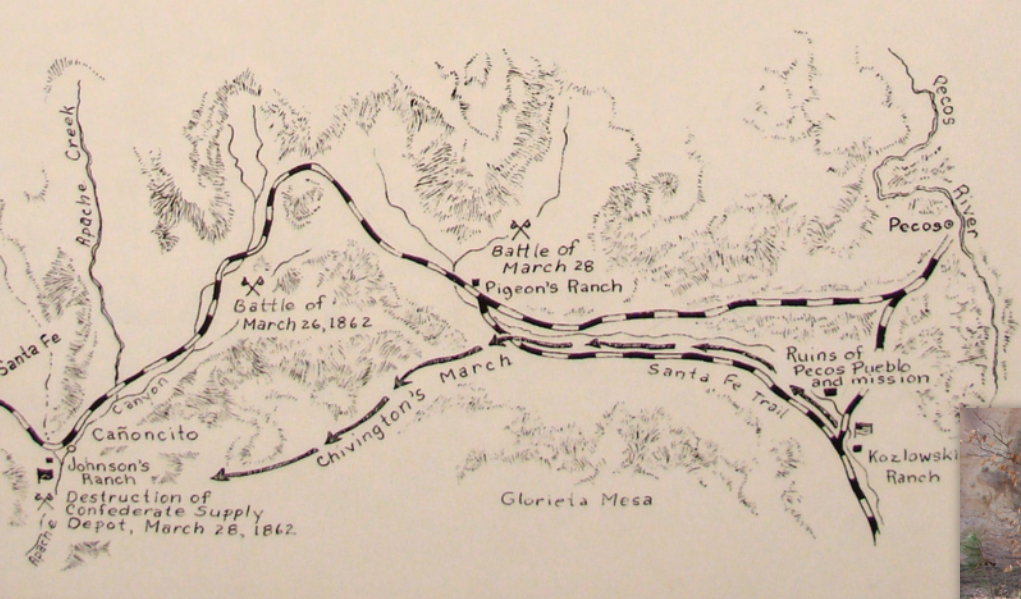
*John S. Shropshire
Major 5th Regmt T.M.V.*

Suffield Clapp was later captured at the battle of Socorro and for six months remained in prison at Albuquerque. When paroled with a number of other prisoners, he made his way to San Antonio, Texas. This was as dangerous a task as any in the service, for their way lay through Indian country and they had several skirmishes with the Indians.

After the war, Clapp returned to Columbus, Texas and began clerking in a store. He later went into farming, in addition to carpentry. At one time, he was constable and deputy sheriff of Colorado County, Texas. Clapp is listed as a Southern Cross of Honor recipient by the Texas Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

**John Samuel Shropshire,
Major, Company A, 5th Texas Cavalry**

Major John S. Shropshire was commander of Company A, 5th Texas Regiment of Mounted Volunteers. He was a lawyer who was born in Kentucky and moved to Texas in 1854 at age twenty-two.



Map of Battle of Glorieta Pass -
Pecos National Historical Park



Texas Monument at Glorieta Pass
- Pecos National Historical Park

He was said to be a tall handsome man with thick dark hair and pale blue eyes. When he married Caroline Tait of Wilcox County, Alabama, his father-in-law gave them a wedding present of forty families of slaves. The 1860 Census lists his personal property at \$50,500 and 62 slaves. They resided in Columbus, Texas.

The Nesbitt Memorial Library in Columbus, Texas is the repository for numerous Shropshire letters written in the winter of 1861 and 1862, while on campaign in New Mexico, "Shrop" wrote a series of letters to his wife, who was called Carrie.

The letters were passed down to their son, Charles Tait Shropshire, then to his widow, the former Nellie Hahn, and then to her relatives. In 1973, Guy Hahn presented eight of the letters and a list of casualties to the Shropshire-Upton Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy for their museum in Columbus, the Confederate Memorial Museum.

John Shropshire had left his family's cotton plantation in Columbus, Texas, at the age of 28, to fight under Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley in the Confederate Army of New Mexico. Sibley wanted to capture New Mexico for the Confederacy, and after that task was accomplished, he planned to conquer much of the rest of the American Southwest.

Shropshire's company, with the rest of Sibley's Brigade, set out for New Mexico in late 1861. Moving up the Rio Grande River and shadowed by U. S. forces, the two armies met at Valverde. On February 21, the second and final day of the battle, Shropshire's company suffered 23 casualties, only one of whom was killed on the battlefield. Shropshire, for his efforts, won a promotion to major and was given command of four companies.

Sibley, wisely or not, continued up the Rio Grande, stopping briefly at Socorro to establish a hospital. There, they left the men of Company A who had been seriously wounded at Valverde, including Suffield Clapp. The rest of Company A continued with the brigade toward Albuquerque.

In a brutal, bloody encounter with the Federal army at the Battle of Glorieta Pass, Sibley's campaign in New Mexico was brought

to its effective end. Glorieta Pass was a strategic location, situated at the southern tip of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, southeast of Santa Fe, and on the Santa Fe Trail. The Battle of Glorieta Pass has been dubbed the "Gettysburg of the West" by some historians, due to permanently altering the course of the war in that region.

On March 26-28, 1862, the two armies met. Compared to Civil War battles in the East, it was a small fight. The Union had about 850 soldiers on the field, while the Confederates numbered around 1,200. The troops fought fiercely for six or seven hours in the narrow canyon. At the end, the Texans held the field of battle, so both sides thought the Confederates had won. They didn't know then that a band of 400 Union soldiers guided by Colonel Manuel Chaves, a New Mexican familiar with the mountainous terrain, had circled around the battle and encountered the Confederates' large supply train. The Union troops burned nearly 80 supply wagons and slaughtered hundreds of horses and mules.

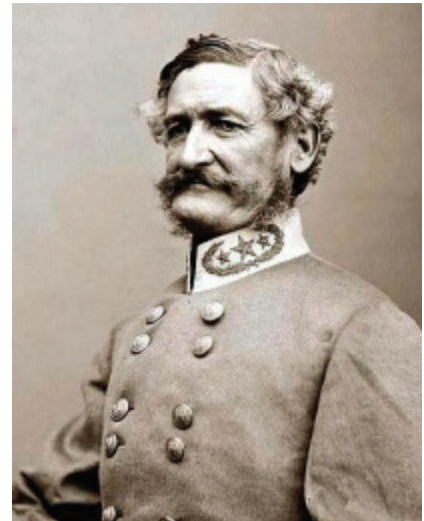
With no supplies and no hope of reinforcements, the Confederates were forced to retreat from New Mexico. They were simply not prepared. They had provided their own weapons, horses and mules. They had no extra clothing, blankets or place from which to draw supplies nor any hope of reinforcements. They were thin and hungry. The Union army was fresh and well provisioned. Sibley's plan to extend the Confederate boundaries to the Pacific was vanquished.

At Glorieta Pass, Shropshire was killed in action on March 28, shot in the head, reportedly by a Union private named George W. Pierce. Shrop's comrade James Carson described his death 58 years later in a letter to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Shropshire-Upton Chapter.

...Major Shropshire ordered me to take my company and drive the enemy out, which was the last order he ever gave...Shropshire and I were leading the charge, and he was shot in the head and killed instantly when we was...about 10 steps of the enemy. After the battle, I, with others of my comrades got the body and took (it) down in



Union troops destroy Confederate supply trains
- Pecos National Historical Park



Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley
- Confederate Army of New Mexico.

the valley and buried it. He was the best friend I ever had. He was one of God's noblemen and his spirit so holy it would not stain the purest (brook) that sparkles among the bowers of bliss. I feel that I can see him now, peeping through the...curtains of Heaven, awaiting and watching the coming of his chivalrous knights

Because he was a very tall man, several accounts note that his body did not fit into the wooden casket acquired for him and he was therefore wrapped in blankets and buried on the battlefield. He was buried as an individual, not in the mass grave of the other Confederate soldiers.

One hundred and twenty-five years after the day the slain Confederates were put in the cold New Mexico earth, a Glorieta man discovered their graves while digging a foundation for his house. Forensic analysis of the bones and on-site evidence from the excavation made it possible for the Museum of New Mexico's Office of Archaeological Studies to positively identify three sets of remains, including Shropshire. He wore two rings, including a delicate, silver one—perhaps a keepsake from his wife—on his left hand.

Major Shropshire was re-buried on August 5, 1990 with military honors at his birthplace in Kentucky alongside his parents. This action was taken at the request of the International Society of Shropshires.

There is a chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in Columbus, Texas that is named for Maj. Shropshire and another Confederate soldier.

Like many officers, Shropshire took one of his slaves with him as a kind of aide-de-camp. After Shropshire died, Bob the slave returned to Company A and became known as Bob Shropshire. He stayed until the end of the war. Shrop's letters express great affection for Bob, such as, "[Bob is] a perfect scamp yet I am attached to him, I can't tell why."

One of the letters at the Nesbitt Memorial Library was written December 6 and 7th, 1861 – the date of the illustrated cover and the only day Sibley's Brigade was at Fort Stockton.

It reads:

Fort Stockton, on Camancha Creek, abt 400 miles from San Antonio, Dec 6th 1861.

My Dear Wife, We arrived at this place last night. met with a serious accident. abt 100 of our horses stampeded last night. I have been hunting horses all day. have first returned We leave this place in the morning. Our horses are growing thin & beautifully less every day. My fine horse would not be worth more than \$100 at home. Tell the Dr that I wish now I had taken his advice and bought a mule. A good mule out here would be a great stake now...the provision train which was to await us on the Pacos, has gone on and our provisions are growing very short, & we were abt to be put upon short allowance and would have been to day, but we heard when we arrived at this place that the train would await us at a fort 80 miles from here, Fort Davis...We are dirty and hungry all the time. The men all complain of not having anything to eat...I think I will weigh now abt 190 lbs. & feel like, generally, that I could eat a horse... Our mules are begin to fail & there is a prospect that we will have to throw away our tents. if we do and we have any sleet something else besides horses will suffer in the flesh...God bless you both.

Yours John.

Dec 7th 1861.

Another stampede last night. We have all the horses in and will be off in a few minutes. With stampeding & starving the majority will soon be afoot. ...

Good bye. God Bless you.

Your Shrop.

It is clear from Shrop's letter to Carrie written at Fort Stockton, that this was only an overnight stop from an army on the move. Shropshire's own words describe the grim reality that was the ultimate cause of the New Mexico campaign failure and his own death. ☒