

**Thanks to  
Rhoda Sneller  
for hosting  
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**Des Moines  
Civil War  
Roundtable**

**March 2026  
Headquarters District Iowa  
General Order No. 508**

- The Third **meeting** of the Spring campaign will **March 18** at the **The Machine Shed**
- The bar will open at 5:30 with the meal served at 6:30.
- Our program *Dennis Doyle (Joliet Jr. College) Irish-Americans During the Civil War*
- Meal choices **Stuffed Pork Loin & Hickory Smoked Chicken** at **\$26.00**
- **Reservations & payment** will be accepted until **March 15.**

**By command of Brigadier General Gordon McKenzie**

**Our web address** [www.dmcivilwar.com](http://www.dmcivilwar.com)

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It is time for many to renew your membership the dues are the same this year  
\$30.00 for Newsletter via PDF  
\$35.00 for Newsletter via USPS  
\$40.00 for families

If you have any question please contact me at [dmcwrt@gmail.com](mailto:dmcwrt@gmail.com) or 515-491-3626

### **This is a REPEAT message--**

#### **The DMCWRT has a problem with payment of the Machine Shed meals.**

We have had an honor system of allowing members to pay at the meeting. Members indicate they plan to attend and I inform the Machine Shed on Monday before the meeting of the number of meals we need. The problem occurs when committed members for whatever reason do not attend. The DMCWRT still has to pay for the meals of the non attending members, and our treasury cannot afford to loss \$26-78 per meeting.

A solution to this problem is (1) either everyone pays in advance or (2) the DMCWRT changes all who say they plan to attend for the meal and do not.

I want to alert the membership to this problem and we can discuss a solution at the next meeting.

## **The Union “has already failed”: Confidence or Delusion from Henry Hopkins Sibley in 1861?**

By Patrick Kelly-Fischer on December 20, 2025 <https://emergingcivilwar.com/2025/12/20/the-union-has-already-failed-confidence-or-delusion-from-henry-hopkins-sibley-in-1861/>

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| <b>Emerging<br/>Civil War</b> |
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164 years ago, Confederate Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley proclaimed that his army had arrived to liberate the New Mexico Territory “from the yoke of a military despotism.”<sup>[1]</sup> With 3,000 Texas cavalry, and a battery of small mountain howitzers, his Army of New Mexico had grand ambitions to secure the Southwest for the Confederacy, including Colorado's gold mines and California’s Pacific ports.

The proclamation issued by Sibley on December 20, 1861 had the self-confidence, or perhaps the hubris, to match those ambitions. It’s a fascinating historical document, albeit once that verges on the absurd in hindsight.

Born in Louisiana, Sibley resigned his commission as a major in the United States Army when the Civil War began. He traveled to Richmond and convinced Confederate

President Jefferson Davis that the New Mexico Territory – present-day New Mexico and Arizona – was ripe for the picking. Davis would have been a receptive audience, having long been interested in the region as an outlet for Southern expansion. With the government's blessing, Sibley returned to Texas, where he recruited, organized and equipped several regiments.

After some predictable delays, Sibley rode west across the desert in late 1861, arriving in the New Mexico Territory as fall gave way to winter. His offensive was meant to follow in the footsteps, and build on the successes, of Lt. Col. John Baylor, who had stormed into southern New Mexico in the summer of 1861. With a few hundred mounted troops and some local support, he captured a significant portion of the Federal forces in the region at the battles of Mesilla and San Augustine Springs. He also propped up the nascent leadership of the recently self-proclaimed Confederate Territory of Arizona, consisting of the southern portions of present-day New Mexico and Arizona.



General Henry Hopkins Sibley had a grand vision for the Confederacy's future in the Southwest, but neither the skill nor the means to bring it to fruition.

Remarkably, Sibley's proclamation never mentions Arizona, an early and subtle sign of his disconnect from the realities on the ground, and a virtually nonexistent working relationship with other Confederate officials in the region. He did, however, make clear his belief that a Confederate victory was assured. He declared that the Union "has already failed", and went on to state that his army was "ample to seize and to maintain possession of New Mexico against any force which the enemy now has or is able to place within its limits."

What fueled that remarkable level of confidence?

The strongest point in his argument was Baylor's string of successes in 1861, which had meaningfully reduced the Federal forces available to defend New Mexico – an accomplishment

that may have loomed larger if Sibley had arrived much sooner. But by the time of Sibley's arrival nearly six months later, Baylor had done little to extend the Confederacy's control, or to build up supplies for a larger

Both the Confederate and Union leadership believed that the Confederacy enjoyed significant clandestine support on the ground. While this never had the impact that the Rebels hoped for and the Federals feared, it certainly existed, and threatened to play a meaningful factor in the campaign. Some prominent civilians in New Mexico were openly supportive of the Confederacy, and sought to stockpile supplies for Sibley. Civilian leadership was openly concerned about local secessionists as far north as Denver, and [one recruit claimed after the war that as many as 600 Confederates were ready to operate in Colorado.](#)

Perhaps most important to Sibley's confidence was the living memory of General Stephen Kearny's 1846 New Mexico Campaign during the Mexican-American War, in which he secured the same region for the United States with a similar number of troops.

It's easy to mock Sibley today, but for a time in 1862, it looked like his early proclamation might not go down in history as a delusional punchline. His army won two tactical victories at [Valverde](#) and [Glorieta Pass](#), and occupied Santa Fe for a time – one of the few Union state or territorial capitals that fell to Confederate forces.

But we know now that Sibley's confidence was badly misplaced. Securing the entirety of the American Southwest in 1862 was a goal that far exceeded the realistic grasp of a few thousand poorly-led, ill-equipped, and half-starved cavalry operating hundreds of miles from their base of supply.

Especially in the fog of war, facing the era's limited communications, the difference between delusion and confidence could be a fine line in the sand.

**NEWS RELEASE WHAT: CIVIL WAR SYMPOSIUM VI  
WHEN: April 17-18, 2026**

**WHERE: Kroc Center, 405 Vermont, Quincy**

**WHO: Historical Society of Quincy & Adams County and  
Tri-States Civil War Round Table**

**Contact: HSQAC-217-222-1835**

Quincy, Ill.....The Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County and the Tri-States Civil War Round Table are sponsoring Civil War Symposium VI, Friday and Saturday, April 17 and 18, at the Kroc Center, 405 Vermont, in Quincy. The two-day event will

offer unique perspectives on the conflict from a variety of presenters, including Lincoln scholars, historical re-enactors, local historians, and Civil War experts.

**On Friday, living historian Brian “Fox” Ellis, will kick off the weekend at 7:05 pm,** with a dynamic performance as General John A. Logan in his program *Black Jack Logan: Soldier and Senator*. A military leader who was elected to Congress first as a Democrat and later as a Republican who campaigned for Lincoln, Logan is often touted as one of the most successful politician-generals in the Union Army, with triumphant military campaigns in Belmont, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Vicksburg, and Atlanta. He is also credited with the recognition of Memorial Day as an official national holiday.

**At 8:00 pm, Erik Alexander** will present *Ulysses S. Grant in American Memory*. Alexander is currently Associate Professor in the Department of History at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, where he teaches courses on the nineteenth-century United States, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. He is finishing a book manuscript titled *Revolution Forestalled: Northern Democrats and the Politics of Reconstruction, 1865–1877* with the University of North Carolina Press.

**Local historians** comprise the Early Bird Vignette portion of Saturday’s event which begins at 8:00 am on Saturday.

Then at **9:15 am Dr. Curt Fields**, nationally known Ulysses S. Grant historical re-enactor, will present *The Making of Ulysses S. Grant*. Fields, returning to the Symposium for the fifth time, portrays Grant as both General and President and has performed the role for thousands of people in 22 states, including film appearances on the Discovery Channel and National Geographic Television and in person at sesquicentennial celebrations at Fort Donelson and Shiloh. He has also performed Grant in Lee’s Surrender to Grant in Vicksburg. He is often featured as Grant at Appomattox and offers Grant’s life story on the Civil War Trust website.

**At 10:05 am, a Symposium favorite, Dr. Sam Wheeler**, will take the stage with ‘A Hellish Outrage’: A Crisis in Law and Order in Civil War Springfield, Illinois. Wheeler’s engaging style and amazing grasp of details will make this a program not to be missed. Wheeler, who served as State Historian of Illinois and Director of Research and Collections at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield for several years, is now Director of History Programs for the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission.

The final presentation of the Symposium is scheduled at **10:55 am, when Jake Friefeld, Director for the Center for Lincoln Studies at University of Illinois-Springfield**, will present his lecture *Hanging Men for Votes: Lincoln, Little Crow, and the 1862 Dakota War*. Previously the Illinois and Midwest Studies Research Historian for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, he now focuses on the Center’s mission of educating the public about Lincoln, his legacy, and his impact on today.

A joint question and answer session for all speakers and audience members will be held from 11:40 am to 12:10 pm.

The Symposium is free and open to the public but reservations are required through the HSQAC

Office at 217-222-1835; [hsqac.org](http://hsqac.org); or [susid@hsqac.org](mailto:susid@hsqac.org).

