

A piece of Civil War history lies in Cubero cemetery

Cibola County Bureau

UBERO — Headstones have been overturned, buildings covering graves have been smashed, but a small part of Civil

covering graves have been smashed, but a small part of Civil War history is preserved in a deep sleep in the "old cemetery" in Cubero. A new one was built around 1915.

Betty DeSoto, a member of the Cibola County Historical Society, pointed out graves during a July 2016 tour. The skewed headstones of Justo Sabedra and Antonio J. Sabedra from Company D, 2nd New

of Justo Sanedra and Antonio J. Sanedra from Company D., 2nd Ne Mexico Infantry, lean against each other in eternal support. Near them is a weathered brown stone with the partially faded name of Sgt. Samuel H. Kenney. At the foot of the grave, a modern marble marker celebrates the lives of Kenney, Pvt. E. Thefford and Pvt. George C. Carruthers of the Confederate States of America, Company A, 7th Texas Mounted Volunteers, who died in the 1860s in Cubero.

The marker was placed by the New Mexico Division of the Sons

The marker was placed by the New Mexico Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

"When they dedicated this, there were 23 Sons of the Confederacy re-enactors that came out here. They were all dressed in period dress. It was so cool – and probably three-fourths of the town had no clue what was going on," DeSoito said. For that story, she referred to Dick Cochran, the Civil War "guru."

Cochran, of Grants, a member of the historical society and a Civil War re-enactor, gave a brief history Sunday of how Confederate soldiers came to be buried in Cubero.

New Mexico invasion

"During the war of northern aggression, a large number of Federal (Union) officers decided to leave the U.S. Army and join the Confederates. One of them was General Henry Hopkins Sibley," Cochran

etaics. One of them was General riethy rhopkins storely. Coefficial said. "He left the Army and as the war started, he came up with an idea and a plan of raising his own brigade and invading New Mexico. "He sold the Confederate high command on the idea of raising army and going north to New Mexico and into Colorado, with the idea of cutting communications across the United States between the the act of cutting Continuin catorists across the Crimer States between the eastern U.S. and California. Another major thing was to try to capture the gold fields in Colorado, for the purpose, obviously, of gaining control of those, cutting off the supply of gold to the Union, and enriching the Confederate coffers, "Cochran said.

Sibley put an army together and started marching north in late fall 1861 from San Antonio, Texas.

"It was somewhat different from the Federal army, in that every-one was responsible for their own horses, their own weapons, their own uniforms," Cochran said. "You can forget the picture of the gray-clad troops all in a line sort of thing. Everybody was in civilian uniform." Although some had rifles, the preferred weapon was a

Shotgun.

They met the Federal troops at Fort Craig, about 30 miles south of Socorro on the Rio Grande River, where the Confederates won the day at the Battle of Val Verde, capturing all the Federal cannons, Cochran said. Marching on, they engaged in the Battle of Glorietta just past Santa Fe.



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Kathy Helms/Independent Two headstones of New soldiers from the 2nd Infantry rest against each other at a cemetery between Budville and Cu bero.

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This plaque marks the graves of Texas CSA volunteers Pvt. E. Thetford, Sgt. Samuel H. Kenney and Pvt. George C. Carruthers in the "old cemetery" in Cubero.

If you go

- Take Interstate Highway 40 east to Exit 104.
 Turn left onto N.M. Highway 124, heading toward Budville. Watch for the Budville Trading Co. sign on
- Just a few feet away, turn right onto N.M. Highway 7. If you pass the Dixie Bar, you've gone too far.

 Turn right and travel less than 1 mile. The cemetery is the first fenced lot on the right with the flagpole

Finis Cavanaugh of Cubero, a Confederate sympathizer who rins Cavanaugi of Cuocio, a Conicuciate sympatinizer Win worked as a medical doctor in Santa Fe, was very much a "wheel-er-dealer and man about town," Cochran said. "He had the post sutlery at Cubero as well as what is now Fort Wingate," where he provided supplies to the soldiers, largely hay grown around Cubero and San Fidel.

Although Cubero wasn't an actual camp, a small group of soldiers

Although Cubero wash t an actual camp, a small group of soidlers was located there, Cochran said.

"Cavanaugh and several others got wind that Sibley was coming up the Rio Grande, so he decides that he's going to take over the post," Cochran said. He gave the captain 10 minutes to decide whether he was going to resist or surrender peacefully. When the captain didn't respond, Cavanaugh – aided by George Gardenhier, R.T. Thompson, and Richmond Gillespie – took over the post.

Aid from sympathizers

Immediately after the takeover, Cavanaugh sent Gillespie on horseback to Albuquerque to meet Sibley's men and let them know about their cache of weapons in Cubero.

"There were approximately 20-25 wagonloads of military supplies there at Cubero that they were taking to Fort Wingate and Fort Defiance, along with 60 guns and 3,000 rounds of ammunition which the Confederates had captured," Cochran said. "That was a real windfall for them."

While Gillespie and Sibley's Confederate troops were simulta-

windtail for them."

While Gillespie and Sibley's Confederate troops were simultaneously approaching Albuquerque, the Federals were busy piling up their supplies in what is now Old Town Plaza, where they tried burn them before the Confederates arrived. In Albuquerque, Gillespie met the Confederate commander, who immediately sent a company

of 25 men to Cubero to secure the supplies, Cochran said.

"One of the comments was that Cavanaugh met them over at Cubero and opened up the store to the Confederate soldiers — who had come up all the way from San Antonio — and gave them clothes and fed them. The Confederates stayed there in Cubero for one full month," he said.

Three of the soldiers died of "pleurisy," or what Cochran believes was pneumonia, during that month. "That's why we have some Confederate graves in Cubero. There was never any battle or anything like that. They were called back and they had to leave several of their

like that. They were called back and they had to leave several of their men there at Cubero because they were just too sick to travel."

Cochran said one of his re-enactor friends found the grave marker for Sgt. Kenney around 1990 or so. "The problem that we have here is we know Kenney was the second one to die. Thetford died on March 21, Kenney died five days later on the 26th, and Carruthers died on April 5, nine days later. So essentially, it was just one, two, three," he said.

"So we are assuming — with all the problems assuming brings — that where Kenney's marker is, that they are buried on either side of

that where Kenney's marker is, that they are buried on either side of him. But we don't know that or have anything to base that on other than just our feelings on that," he said.

There has been no attempt to find the deceased soldiers' relatives