



Misconceptions About Colorado and the War for Southern Independence

Most written histories of Colorado only briefly mention the events that took place during the War for Southern Independence (1861-1865). The events and incidents that were reported were generally described as being of little significance or importance. Those events that did take place in Colorado are usually described in the following manner:

- Colorado was very loyal to the Union;
- The majority of its resources went to support the Union cause;
- There were no “Civil War Battles” fought within the territory (other than the Sand Creek Indian Massacre);
- The US Army had little or no trouble with the Confederates in Colorado after 1862.

Unfortunately, these descriptions over simplify the events that occurred in Colorado during the War. In reality, more went on in Colorado during the War than is popularly known, admitted or reported in history books:

- Colorado was only marginally loyal to the Union, as 4 statehood attempts were thwarted by Confederate sympathizers (in July 1862, February 1863, February 1864, and January 1866);
- Many thousands of dollars’ worth of gold, arms, supplies and money went to the Confederate cause from Colorado;
- There were at least 4 separate Confederate Partisan Ranger units operating within the Colorado Territory from 1861 to 1865 (raiding supply wagon trains, disrupting communications lines, recruiting volunteers, and skirmishing with Union Troops); and,
- The last reported Confederate activity took place in March 1865.

Colorado played an important role during the War for Southern Independence and many “clashes” between Confederate and Union forces took place within its borders. Additionally, after the War, Colorado became a haven for many thousands of ex-Confederates and Southerner seeking to start a new life in a new frontier. Through the years, Colorado has embraced its Confederate heritage by dedicating many monuments and memorials to honor those who fought for the Confederacy.

Interestingly, Colorado is the only non-Southern State to host a national convention of surviving Confederate Veterans! The national organization of the United Confederate Veterans (active from 1890-1951) held their 49th Reunion in Trinidad, Colorado (August 22-25, 1939).

And finally, after the War, Colorado became the only non-Southern state to have two ex-

Confederate soldiers elected to the office of state governor:

James B. Grant (Private, Company B, 20th Alabama Light Artillery Battalion, Confederate States of America) served as the 3rd Governor of Colorado from 1883-1885.

Charles S. Thomas (Private, Georgia State Militia, Confederate States of America) served as the 11th Governor of Colorado from 1899-1901 and as a U.S. Senator.

