

## MEMORANDA ON THE CIVIL WAR.

### The Canal at Island No. 10.

A REPLY FROM GENERAL SCHUYLER HAMILTON.

To the EDITOR OF THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

SIR: THE CENTURY MAGAZINE for February, 1889, contains a letter from Colonel George A. Williams, United States Army, speaking quite dogmatically of the origin of the canal above New Madrid which led to the capture of Island No. 10, and rather contemptuously of the honor of suggesting the canal. Colonel Williams alleges the "correct history" to be that the canal was suggested by a saw-mill refugee named Morrison, who was taken from a raft.

I regret that I was not afforded a hearing upon *this* subject before Colonel Williams's letter appeared.

Its publication forces me to say that I never saw nor heard of the raft refugee Morrison, mentioned by Colonel Williams, and that the suggestion for a canal which I made to General Pope was original with me. I did not receive the idea, directly or indirectly, wholly or partly, from Colonel Williams, saw-mill Morrison, or from any one else.

As part of the history of the canal incident, I beg space for the following extract from a letter written by me to B. J. Lossing, Esq., on the 7th of June, 1863:

The following record of a conversation of Mr. Solomon Sturgis of Chicago, who contributed very liberally to the equipment of the Sturgis rifles, I find in one of my letters dated March 31, 1862. It may not be uninteresting in this connection. It was said to be characteristic. He said, addressing General Pope: "General Pope, who suggested that plan? Tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; do not rob any man of the credit due him." General Pope replied with a smile, "General Hamilton suggested it, sir." Turning to me, he said, "General Hamilton, was it honestly your own conception? Did no one hint it to you—no private, no corporal, no sergeant, no one?" On my replying, "No one, sir," he said: "Sir, give me both your hands, I honor you for it; and, General Pope," said he, "you deserve high honor for adopting so wise a suggestion."

That is the record as I made it at the time, and it is true.

*Schuyler Hamilton,*  
*Late Maj.-Gen'l Vols., U. S. Army.*

NEW YORK CITY, March 31, 1889.

[Colonel Williams died at Newburg, N. Y., April 2, 1889.—EDITOR.]

### An Early Suggestion to Arm Negroes for the Confederacy.<sup>1</sup>

AS THERE has been a variety of opinion in relation to the status of negro slaves under the late Confederate States Government during the civil war, I transmit for your consideration, from an official letter-book, a copy of my official letter to Hon. C. W. Harper, chairman of a sub-committee of the Mississippi legislature, then in session at Jackson, Miss., expressing in brief my views as to the employment of slaves in the construction of the military defenses of the State. It is per-

<sup>1</sup> See also the correspondence on this topic between General R. E. Lee and the Hon. Andrew Hunter printed in THE CENTURY for August, 1888. The present article was written before that correspondence appeared.—EDITOR.

haps expedient to note that in the construction of the defenses at Port Hudson, which I had established during the month of August, soon after the battle of Baton Rouge, I found it necessary to impress slave laborers for the prosecution of the work; and to repair the defenses at Vicksburg, and in some measure extend them, I found it necessary to impress several hundred negro slaves.

It was then a critical period with owners of slaves along the Mississippi River border, particularly above Vicksburg, where they were constantly menaced by predatory gunboats carrying off slaves, cotton, and supplies, without effective resistance. Under these circumstances, in my preliminary orders it was necessary to restrict, or limit, the field for impressment to the Mississippi border, to which little or no opposition was manifested by planters, especially as this public service was supposed to give some degree of protection to their individual interests.

In connection with the practical operation of this policy the legislative committee requested explicit official information as to my views on this subject, a summary of which I embodied in a letter as follows:

HEADQUARTERS FIRST DISTRICT,  
DEPARTMENT MISS. & EAST LOUISIANA,  
JACKSON, Dec. 16, 1862.

To Hon. C. W. Harper.

SIR: In reply to your communication of the 14th inst., requesting information as to the number of slaves who might be advantageously used in connection with our military defenses in this State, will say that my own views on the subject go very much beyond what is thought to be politic by most gentlemen, but will in response confine myself within such limits of seeming propriety as may commend the subject to the good common sense of those who are to be affected by it.

At this time, and until they shall be completed, one thousand negro men can and ought to be employed constantly on each of the works at Vicksburg, Port Hudson, and Columbus, and two thousand more could be used in the supply and transportation departments; perhaps a thousand more—part women—could be employed for hospital purposes.

Our railroads are in great need of repairs; a thousand negro laborers should be put upon them immediately and continuously employed. The construction and repairs of rolling stock, too, need much attention, and half the negro carpenters and blacksmiths in the State might be well employed upon it, and in the erection of buildings needed for many purposes.

In this way, and by the employment of other servants as teamsters, laborers, cooks, nurses, watchmen, etc., with our armies in the field, the fighting strength of these armies might certainly be increased one-tenth, and although laborers in the field of the husbandman are as necessary as soldiers in the army, to enable them to prosecute the war waged against us, I yet believe that ten thousand negroes might be spared from the former service in this State, without danger of too great reduction in agricultural supplies, and made almost if not quite as useful in the army and other public service as an equal number of white men. As a system, I think it would be well to introduce into the service, as cooks, one negro for every ten soldiers. These servants, when the troops were absent from camp, could be made available as watchmen for camp and police duty, thus relieving so many soldiers for service in the field.

Negroes thus employed should be organized in detachments and placed under the direction and control of per-

sons of well-known character, experienced in their management, and whose management and care should conform as nearly as might be to that of a prudent owner of slaves upon his own plantation. Without this, and unless much attention was given to the proper care and treatment of the slaves, great dissatisfaction would necessarily ensue amongst the owners, who, as a class, are always supposed to take great interest in everything pertaining to the comfort and welfare of their servants.

The slaves, for the purposes mentioned, should, of course, be drawn according to some fixed rule from the entire body of slave owners in the State, and not taken from some small neighborhood or county locality. As the war in which we are now engaged was brought about, in a measure, for the protection of rights connected with slave property, I take for granted that those who own slaves are not only quite willing to render every personal service which the country may require, but will gladly show to those who own no slaves, and who so patriotically swell the ranks of our armies, the greatest willingness to relieve them in every possible way from hardships incident to the service in which they are engaged by the substitution of slave labor when it can be done. This will be but their reasonable duty.

These last remarks, though not called for by your special inquiries, are nevertheless given as reflections not entirely irrelevant. In truth, sir, did it not seem to excuse to some extent the avowed purpose of the Federal Government to use the negro against us, if in their power, a small percentage of our male slaves should be made to act with their masters in the field against the common enemy of both. I am quite sure that such an exhibition of confidence on our part would have a salutary effect in preventing the alienation and demoralization of that class of our people.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
(Signed) DANIEL RUGGLES,  
Brigadier-General, P. A. C. S.

Within a brief period the legislature of the State of Mississippi authorized Governor Pettus to hold ten thousand slaves subject to the requisition of the President of the Confederate States, to be employed upon the military defenses of the State of Mississippi. During this period I was commanding the Department of Mississippi, as the successor of Major-General Earl Van Dorn, who had marched with an army, then recently organized, to attack the Federal enemy at Corinth.

In the meantime, and in anticipation of summary action of the legislature of Mississippi, I had occasion to send dispatches to Richmond by a distinguished volunteer aide-de-camp, to whom I confided my views in relation to the employment of slaves for manual labor in connection with our military defenses, and with the view of the gradual enrollment of selected slaves for bearing arms for service with armies in the field.

It was contemplated that exemplary conduct by the slave, and faithful service in the field, would entitle him to a well-defined and liberal personal reward.

On his return, my aide-de-camp informed me that no member of the Confederate cabinet appeared to give the subject favorable consideration.

Thus our earliest effort systematically to utilize and enroll negro slaves in the Confederate armies for service in the field proved abortive.

FREDERICKSBURG, VA.

Daniel Ruggles.

#### Strength of the Confederate Army at Gettysburg.

THE Army of Northern Virginia by its return of May 31, 1863, numbered present for duty, officers and men:

General Lee and staff	17
Infantry	59,467
Cavalry	10,292
Artillery, 206 pieces	4,702
	<u>74,478</u>

Alexander's and Garnett's battalions of artillery are not included in this return. Alexander's battalion had twenty-six guns, Garnett's fifteen. Estimating them at the same number of men per gun as in the battalions reporting gives 935 to add to the total, making the line-of-battle strength of the army, 31st May, 75,413, with 247 pieces of artillery.

Early in June the army was reinforced by the infantry brigade of General J. J. Pettigrew from the Department of Richmond, with 3685 officers and men for duty, and the brigade of General Joseph R. Davis, from the Department of North Carolina, with 2577 for duty. The strength of these brigades is taken from the return of the Department of Richmond and of North Carolina for May 31, 1863. Corse's brigade of Pickett's division and one of Pettigrew's regiments, about 2200 in all, were left at Hanover Junction. Three of General Early's regiments, numbering, according to an article by that officer in Vol. V. of the Southern Historical Society papers, 919 for duty, were detached at Winchester to guard prisoners and garrison that place. The 25th Virginia of Johnson's division, and the 31st Virginia of Early's division, which had been on detached service since April 20, rejoined their commands near Winchester with 700 men for duty, and at the same place the 2d Maryland battalion was added to Johnson's division. Major Goldsborough, in his history of the "Maryland Line," says it took 500 men into action at Gettysburg. The Confederate infantry that crossed the Potomac, assuming that the gain by recruits, conscripts, and return of convalescent, furloughed, and detached men was offset by the small loss at Winchester and by sickness and desertion, was 64,000.

The cavalry was reinforced at Winchester by the 1st Maryland battalion, 300 strong, and by the brigade of General A. G. Jenkins, 1800 for duty. General Imboden, with a force which, in an article in "The Galaxy" for April, 1871, he states as "about 2100 effective mounted men and a six-gun battery," joined the army at Chambersburg. The commands of Mosby and Gilmore were also attached to the cavalry.

Two batteries of six guns each were added to the artillery: one, the Baltimore Light Artillery, at Winchester; one came with Imboden.

The Confederate army in the Gettysburg campaign had for duty in round numbers at least

Infantry	64,000
Cavalry	14,500
Artillery, 259 pieces	5,900
	<u>84,400</u>

and on the field of Gettysburg *eighty thousand men*.

The loss of the army is incompletely given in the report of its Medical Director, printed in the Appendix to the Comte de Paris's history of the battle as 20,448. In Pettigrew's brigade, and probably in other brigades of Hill's corps, the losses for the first day only are given. The reports of the corps commanders, which can be found in Vols. II. and X. of the Southern Historical Society papers, give the casualties as follows:

	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
Longstreet's corps	933	4,453	2,273	
Ewell's " "	930	4,076	1,350	
A. P. Hill's " "	849	4,289	3,844	
	<u>2,712</u>	<u>12,818</u>	<u>7,467</u>	<u>22,997</u>

The loss of the cavalry is nowhere accurately given. From Beverly Ford to Upperville inclusive it was 995.

At Gettysburg four brigades report losses aggregating 240. There was not a day from July 1 to July 20 when some portion of the cavalry was not engaged. Three thousand is not an overestimate of its loss in the campaign.

The total loss of Lee's army in June and July, 1863, was not less than 26,000.

CINCINNATI, O.

*E. C. Dawes.*

"Stonewall Jackson's Intentions at Harper's Ferry."

IN an article which appeared in your magazine in June, 1886, written by General John G. Walker, late of the Confederate army, entitled "Harper's Ferry and Sharpsburg," the statement is made by the author that he received a signal order from General Stonewall Jackson not to open fire on Harper's Ferry unless forced to do so, as he (Jackson) designed to summon the Federal commander to surrender, and, should he refuse, to give him time to remove non-combatants and then carry the place by assault. This statement, I am told, has been questioned by General Bradley T. Johnson and Colonel H. Kyd Douglas, and the object of this note is to confirm General Walker's statement.<sup>1</sup> I was at the time assistant adjutant-general of the division commanded by General Walker, and was present on Loudoun Heights when the order in question was received; and I recollect that in consequence of its receipt the fire of our guns, which had

been in position from an early hour in the morning, was withheld until the afternoon, and was not then opened until the Federal batteries on Bolivar Heights opened on the infantry force of General Walker, under the command of Colonel (now Senator) Ransom.

My three years' daily intercourse with General Jackson at the Virginia Military Institute makes me confident that, in giving his signal orders, he would neither consult with his subordinates near him nor inform them what orders he had given or would give under the circumstances; therefore it is not surprising that the orders sent to General Walker were not known. The knowledge of the contradiction of General Walker's statement has just reached me. Hence the tardiness of my confirmation of its substantial accuracy.

*William A. Smith.*

"A Question of Command at Franklin."

WE have received from General D. S. Stanley a letter in reply to General Cox's statement in THE CENTURY for February, 1889 (page 630). In this letter General Stanley denies that he retired from the field of Franklin after he had been wounded, or that General Cox was the senior officer of the line from the time Wagner's troops were driven back until the battle was entirely ended. General Cox, however, does not recede from his position on these points. The details of the controversy cannot be given here.—EDITOR.

## TOPICS OF THE TIME.

John Bright.

SOME of us still have vivid recollections of that agony of blood and sweat through which the great North American Republic vindicated its right and title to nationality. It had fixed its boundaries and defended them successfully against assaults from abroad; now it was to prove to the world that those boundaries were not to be broken down by any force from within. Though a new generation has come into being since then, twenty-five years are too few to make us forget how the scales, which had been so long in dubious balance, began to settle slowly towards the side of the maintenance of the Union; nor can they make us forget how the waiting-time was broken again and again by the ring of good cheer in the words of the dead leader whose thoroughly English name heads this article.

The American people will not remember John Bright best as the opponent of the Corn Laws, as the uncompromising free trader, as the friend of oppressed nationalities everywhere, or as the man who dared denounce the Crimean war, though it cost him his seat in the House of Commons; they will remember him better as men remember him who stands their friend when most they need a friend. There was a time when, in Bright's own words at Birmingham, "nearly 500,000 persons — men, women, and children — at this

moment are saved from the utmost extremes of famine, not a few of them from death, by the contributions which they are receiving from all parts of the country." There was but one barrier—the blockade—between this hungry people and the prosperity which abundant cotton would bring them; and there were voices in plenty to urge them to bid their Government attempt to break the blockade. No one can say that it was John Bright's eloquence which held Lancashire to the conviction that its permanent interest was in the success of the American experiment; but it is certain that John Bright's eloquence lost nothing in effectiveness from the fact that he had given up his income, and allowed his six cotton-mills to stand idle rather than say one word which would even embarrass the American people in the throes of their struggle for national existence.

John Bright was as absolutely destitute of fear as John Knox. He was not to be moved by any social pressure from telling workmen the truth, as he understood it, about the hopes which filled many English high places for the downfall of the American Republic. "Privilege," said he to them in 1863, "thinks it has a great interest in it, and every morning, with blatant voice, it comes into your streets and curses the American Republic. Privilege has beheld an afflicting spectacle for many years past. It has beheld thirty million men, happy and prosperous, without emperor, without king, without the surroundings of a court, without great armies and great navies, without great debt, and without great taxes. And Privilege has shud-

<sup>1</sup> For the comments by General Johnson and Colonel Douglas see *The Century War Book*, "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," Vol. II., p. 615 *et seq.*