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The Lafayette McLaws Papers

Lafayette McLaws

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A-95

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1.50

67
Gattyobad

Savannah Georgia
March 8th 1886

Dear Sir

I have been delayed by sickness from completing the manuscript as promised, but having it well underway, hope to send it during this week.

The Map, you sent me, is of no value in the discussion - But Lee had a marked line of defense while that Map does not show; upon which the Confederates retired & occupied on the 3rd July after "Pickett's Charge" - he does the Map show the proper position of the forces on either side, it seems to have omitted the Laws Division, and some others - I write therefore send you mine, with the understanding, that it is to be returned to me.

I deliver an address, on the "Bulletin of Gettysburg", before the Georgia Historical Society, which incidentally discusses the question at issue, as to General Lee's change of means should he have assaulted General Lee. If you desire to read it and if it pleases,

to publish it, I will try and send you a copy,
from that in the Society room.

Very respectfully
Yours obedient
L M^r Law

Savannah Georgia
March 27. 1886

Bro. A. Pennyfocker
Editor Weekly Press
Phil Pa

Dear Sir

Your letter of 27th with acknowledgments
the receipt of manuscript & map. (a copy of my address
before G. Historical Society was also enclosed) was
received a few moments since.

I thank you for your frank comments on
my composition, and agree with you that
the paragraph relating to the testimony of Genl
Sickles should not be inserted, and therefore, by
what you will erase the whole of it. Com-
mencing, "Genl Sickles testifies" and ending
"as he had been but a short time previously
assigned to command" - as quoted in your letter -
Since forwarding the article, I have regretted
that I had written Sickles "opinion" or part of it,
and am glad that your discriminating, good taste
and frankness, has given me the opportunity
of correcting my error.

The Confederate Congressman, from whom I obtained
Ex-Senator Jefferson Davis' opinion of Gen. Meade
was, Col R. R. Bridges, who was at the time and may
be now, President I think - perhaps Superintendent
of the "Coast Line R. Road" - Wilmington and U.S. and
N.C. - I can have no objection to your inserting
the paragraph as a Foot Note, as you intimate

While writing of Gen. Meade, allow me to suggest
that, it would be a valuable contribution to the history
of the times, if Gen. Meade, Son, would give an "inside"
account of Gen. Meade's "administration" in Georgia,
especially, so much of it, as relates to the trial of the
"Columbus prisoners", and the agreement entered into
with Gen. Joseph E. Brown, now Senator from
Georgia, whereby Gen. B. became, the Provost,
attorney, receiving therefor, Ten thousand dollars,
Gen. B. published a pamphlet, giving his version of
transaction, but not until after the death of Gen.
M. - If Col Meade has never seen a copy of the
"Pamphlet" alluded to of Gen. B., I will if he so desires
try and find one for him.

Very respectfully
L. M. Howe,

3-1084
85
250
1/2
Savannah Georgia
Aug. 19. 1886

Isaac A. Pennington
Editor Weekly Phil Press
Dear Sir

I send you a letter received
from Captain F. A. Donaldson. 118 P.V. and ask
that you publish it, with my reply thereto, if
you do not object.

Incidents like those mentioned go strongly
to corroborate each narrative, and it is incidentally
brought out that Gen. Sickles' troops were so
badly defeated, that their place had to be
supplied by men from other commands, and
it is done in a way to carry conviction that it
was so - Thus these discrepancies from a strictly
military record, go not only to prove the record
but relieve the dull monotony of a narrative, where
only the arrangements of troops are told.

I have written Capt. D. that my intention
was to write and ask you to publish his
letter, and he will hardly object, if my
reply to him goes with it -

Very Respectfully
L M. Low

ULDRICK H. McLAWS,

7 Drayton Street, Cor. Bryan.

Savannah, Ga., July 13 1885

75
not 75
very good
Z. 604

Isaac R. Pennybaker
Edin. R. R.
Dear Sir

I sent you a few days since, a review of Genl
Lamp. "Gettysburg" - in his work. Called. "Memories of Genl Lee" - as
far as he refers to the operations of McClellan's Division - I wrote
a letter to accompany the paper, but by mistake it was
mixed with the roll of manuscripts - I suppose, as it can-
not be found, - To make sure that you receive one, I trouble
you with this -

I therein stated, or intended to write - that I would at once
commence a paper, on the Maryland Campaign of 1862,
especially commenting therein on the failure of Franklin
to push his advantages, after having forced the Rappahannock
River, some five or six miles above Harper's Ferry, and
hope to give you a paper that will be acceptable -

Several years ago, five or six or perhaps 8 years ago, Genl
Lamp published an article in some Magazine or newspaper,
stating therein that, when Genl Lee assumed Command
after the battle of Seven Pines - the day after Genl Johnston
was wounded - he, Genl Lee, found the army very dispirited
but that the presence of Genl Lee infused new life into it.
- Genl Langston sent me clippings from Lamp's article
and asked if it was true as Lamp stated - with every
Command. That he had not discovered it until then -

I replied, ridiculing the idea - saying that it was far
fetched, and absurd - that nothing had happened to
to dampen the ardor of the troops - and as Genl Lee was
not known to the army then - and had up to that
time, had done nothing to bring him into favorable

notice - ~~at~~ the contrary, his campaign in West Va
from whatever cause, no one knew; ~~that~~ had been a failure
- and therefore, if there was a despondent spirit among
us when he came, it must have been, he came, but
he was to replace Gen Johnston, whose career both
in the Florida war, & afterwards in the Mexican war,
had been brilliant, & whose conduct at Bull Run
had excited much enthusiasm - that Gen Johnston
was well known to be a very chivalrous officer.
Constantly exposing himself, whenever the chances of
success seemed doubtful & was personally always
scrupulously affable, especially to the men in the ranks
and never otherwise than pleasant to any one - &
therefore it must have been, that if there was any de-
jection it was because, ~~that~~ ~~that~~ Gen Johnston
was going away - I wrote freely to Gen Longstreet
who was a close friend - never supposing, for a moment
that it would be given to the public - But nevertheless
he did publish it, without my consent & without
my knowledge - nor did I know of it - until many
months after - I happened to read in an old paper
a reply to my private letter - made by Gen Long, who
wrote in a very irritated manner - ~~this~~ was so long a time
after my letter was written to Gen Longstreet - that I did not
reply - and now I suppose Gen Long is still irritated
and is taking his spite out, by writing, concerning
my command, such stuff as we read of in the Memoirs
& which I look the thing to come & hope you will
publish

Gen Franklin in a short notice, in reference to the surrender of Harper's
Ferry, says this - the Federal Commander surrendered the place out
of order - As I did not know of a white flag until 10 o'clock - I
did not know as to the flag, before I did? "

Savannah, Ga., March 13 1886
155 Liberty

Dear Mr. Pennyfather
Please weekly press
Dear Sir

I beg leave to acknowledge
the receipt of a number of copies of the press
in which was published the first part of - a
part of my article, reviewing, as much of Genl
Lump's memoirs of Genl Lee, as refers to Longstreet's
Caper at Gettysburg. - If the remainder of the article
has been published, copies of the paper containing
it have not been received.

I would have had the article, promised
about Harper, Ferry, Franklin &c. ready for Jan.
but, happening to come across, a number of the
volume "War of the Rebellion?" published by act of
Congress & containing, the Report of the General Federal
Commander, engaged in the Maryland Campaign
1862. I found as much, which to me, was most
valuable, all substantiating my statements; that
I have in a measure, revised my article
and will rewrite it, quoting largely from Federal
Sources.

It will be borne in mind that, my statistics
of Forces engaged, & losses - are taken from returns
made by the General Commanders, to myself, or
by me to my superiors - and that these returns were
never made under the belief that they would
be captured - that if they are wrong at the time

They would have been there and then, Corried
- that since those returns, were intended to be
but they have never been seen by those who
made them - and therefore never could have
been doctored to meet the views or prejudices
of any body, - and therefore must be taken as
Concord & True.

In instance my return, intended as true stated
- show that I attacked Maryland Heights, with
Artillery and with not over 1600 men, - in
two Brigades, - and that my force at Crampston
Gap was for three hours, not over 600 men
- reinforced, - when too late, by Cobb's Brigade
numbering about 1200 - The force I should have
been taken in an hour & was not, until dark
after four or five or six hours fighting.

The flags (white) were not raised in Harper's Ferry
until after 10 Am.

My troops did not leave their ground in front
of Franklin until late in evening of the 15. - all
this can be proved.

Very respectfully
Yours obt. Servt
L M & Lovers

1
Savannah Georgia
April 25. 1888

Loose A Penny Parker
Editor Weekly Press
Pleasant Pa

Dear Sir

Yours of 17. received a day
together with the paper containing
the remaining portions of my article
in review of, Long Book, &c for
which please accept my thanks - If
I could obtain copies of that paper,
nos. of 15. 22. & 29. I would like to send
one to each of my friends, who were
prominent in that battle - among
them, Gen Long Mont. Gen S. B. Kercheval
Camden &c. - Gen E. P. Alexander
Sav &c. - Gen Wesley Gould. Sav - and
retain two or three copies for myself
& family. - Have just received a
note from Gen Long Mont asking
for copies - will send him mine.

In reference to the re-union at Gettys-
burg, Martin and Alexander. Gould
and myself have thus far been no-
ticed in connection with it - Gen
Sickles on a previous occasion
sent me a very pressing invitation

Whole Report is very minute & anything - He has also obtained my statements in regard to some matters which are not down in the books, in ~~my~~ official Report - How far his views as to the cause of failure in this Campaign ^{with mine} may agree, I of course cannot say, as yet. Whether he thinks, that it was not intended to be a success or was unsuccessful, because success was not possible, I doubt. - If I dare to do so, I think I could make others besides myself, think that it was not intended to be a success.

Gen Law wrote an article, whether published or remains to be, I do not know - Concerning matters that happened after the battle of Chancellorsville, he sent it to me, for perusal. I found that

promising me good cheer, and to give me a tent on the field, next to himself - But now I suppose as he may think I am not a Pickles Man - it will not be in Order to have me - However, although the invitation would be taken as highly complimentary, I could not go, for the reasons given for not accepting, your very kind wish, for me to go in company with yourself, out to town the first.

Gen E M Law was - Brigadier in Harts Division and was harshly treated by Gen Longstreet and perhaps is inimical to him to day, He has given many points from me in reference to my Division and has my official Report as published in the "Story of the Rebellion".

he had made statements of affairs -
 for instance - asserting that the enemy
 were not pursued after the battle.
 Was knowing that I was ordered
 in pursuit & went at once - following
 the army to the outskirts of the city
 (causing them to burn all the houses
 in front of the fortifications) and
 holding my ground, with 1st & 2nd
 Quarters at Watkins Hill - overlooking
 the town. Turning four hours in advance
 of the rest of the army - I have no
 doubt that credit was even given me
 for it, simply perhaps, because I never
 claimed any - I have told him that
 a pursuit was ordered by Gen Bragg
 and I was to follow other divisions
 but as the others did not come, I
 advanced, expecting ^{the} others to follow
 - but was mistaken - Gen Cheatham was
 ordered to report to me, but although he
 came into the valley, he withdrew his troops
 because of the large bodies of the enemy he
 encountered - leaving me on Watkins
 Hill - he reported in person, after dark, & I
 told him to stay on the heights, 3 miles away

I made no official report of this
although our troops were quite
badly engaged, while in the per-
sonal & my loss was considerable.
and ~~that~~ it has been fashionable
to ~~say~~ abuse General Briggs, attri-
-buting every thing that happened
wrong, to his ineptness for command.
- Thus I would be very glad indeed
if you would add your influence
to cause a call to be made for such
Briggs papers, so that he may be
heard in his own defence - I un-
-derstand that he left a very full
record, and as he was a very ready
and very forcible writer
- equal to any then in U. S. A.
- and occupied the highest positions
- his narrative of events would be
in the highest degree interesting
- If his papers could be obtained
I know that it would be shown
that pursuit was ordered, - that
my command alone was forwarded

and those who were ordered and
did not go - until he came d^r I

Can only recollect now that Mrs Black-
embury was ordered with the Division
to lead, but she did not come - Why
not, I never inquired - The way
have gone on another road.

Several people of Alabama, once told
me that Mrs Bragg had offered to give
them control of her papers of her
husband - She may be holding them
for publication on her own account.
If so they should be purchased, for
the War Record of Rebellion?!

Would be glad should you think
my last contribution a worthy one

Very truly
Yours &c

L M^r Laws

I have just returned from a long
trip into the interior of State, and will
be home again in the morning, - Thus have
hesitated to reply.

Very

I M^r Laws

Savannah Georgia

May 20. 1888

J. R. Piermyer
East Ohio Weekly Press

Dear Sir

What is the matter with the document I sent, relative to the Mayland Campaign of 1862? I have nothing, from you relative to it, not even, that it has been rec^d.

I take it for granted that "Politics", on the war now being carried on, between the parties representing "Protection for protectionth John", and "Protection incident on Revenue," requires so much attention that the present war, is a very small matter in comparison.

But the Campaign now on foot, is as much a war as was the one called "the War of the Rebellion" - the same armies, enlisted on each side, which go as ordered by their respective leaders, with as little idea of the Men's demands,

of the questions really at issue, as did our
Armies in the field. You practice all the
arts of strategy, make false attacks, to
conceal the real one, have the same
mobility as regular armies have in getting
supplies, of ammunition and provisions
and arms, and in all things you act
as if it was real war, excepting, that you
do not kill with the sword, nor use the
gunpowder, nor the bagshot - but
the devastation is nevertheless just as great,
and the Conqueror causes a little for the
Suffering, the Conqueror, as did the victorious
General -

UUU
In my paper I aimed to prove by quotations
from documents officially published - that
after due consideration by Gen Halleck Commander
in Chief, of the question, "Shall ^{all} the troops now
in Harper's Ferry be ordered to the Maryland
Highlands" this on 5th Sep, 1862 - He submitted
it for the action of Gen Wood who Commanded
the Department in which Harper's Ferry was
included - and Gen Wood named Miles
to hold Harper's Ferry to the last extremity

by this order, he deprived Col Miles of all discretion
in the matter if he was to defend Harper's
Ferry, and every other position was subordinate
to it - By occupying the Heights he was
certainly could not have prevented Genl
Jackson from occupying the town, an
illustration; head wheat was down at Frederick,
when Burnside occupied the Heights on the
opposite side of the Rappahannock, neither a
town nor numerous city, and under
such was favorable circumstances - The
city then had no effect against the occupation
of the town - not one foot being abandoned
because of the city fire -

It also aimed to show that in obedience to his
orders, Col Miles did hold the town & area
many days "to the last extremity", because the
universal testimony was & is in the Official Pub-
lications - "that the troops could not have
withstood an assault", at any rate
he held it long enough, to have enabled Genl
McClellan & Gen Franklin, to have moved

their troops, so as to have needed them to have
 attacked the Lee's scattered forces, in detail
 each by largely superior bodies of men.
 Thus the opportunity to do this was
 given, and was not taken advantage
 of, but was lost by inaction!

I also showed, in attempted to - that at Shafter's
 every portion of the Confederate force was
 engaged - their numbers, losses, in each
 and every command, as compared with
 the numbers they had in the battle, showing
 that there was no man in reserve,
 - whereas the returns I quote show there
 in the Reserve under Plater, and in the
 15000 strong, & in Franklin's Corps the
 losses were so small, that we are authorized
 to say, that they were not heavily
 engaged, & might be looked on as Reserve
 forces. And this Reserve force was
 more than the Confederates had in
 line at any one time - Our Reserve bodies
 arriving, one after another, to at once be
 ordered into the fight.

Sometimes it seems as if the reaction still continued, and every opportunity which many would have taken advantage of, was lost.

It requires free quotations from official reports to make this credible.

And it also requires many full extracts to make it credible, thus Col Miles did not have a man with him, who protested against the surrender of Harper's Ferry, and urged that the troops stand an assault.

For the above reasons, and because I know that public opinion is not as accurate with the news I have taken. I thought it best to make large quotations from official publications, so that the public, in the large majority of those who read, who cannot get the information for themselves, may form their own opinions, from official data given them.

But if you think that more reference

is sufficient, to change public opinion
as I think it must be changed, if
we really are seeking the truth
I am willing to revise my article
and endeavour to conform to your
views

Very respectfully
Yours truly
L M^cHardy

Savannah Georgia

August. 28. 1888.

J R Pennypacker
Phila Pa

Dear Sir

I herewith send you a Photo
of myself taken some eight or ten years
past. This in compliance with your
request in your letter of the 25th rec^d.
Yesterday. It has become indistinct
by age and the effects of this moist
climate. but if it will answer your
purpose. I will be gratified and feel
complimented by the desire expressed
for it.

As for Gen Longstreet's Corps was composed
of three Divisions Commanded respectively
by Lt Gen. Hood & Pickens and his Adj
by Gen E P Alexander. He knew these his Division
Commanders, and his Adj of Adj, Regiment and

instructions that he could give, and therefore
never gave any, beyond the order of march
and marching, and matters of detail. He
never had conferences with his Division Commanders,
who in turn never sought him, except to get "the
news" - never for advice, for they were
fully his equals ^{in ability} - nor did he seek Council
nor conferences with his equals in rank, nor
even with his Superiors. He allowed himself
to be influenced by very inferior personages
either of his Staff, or from those of his Command
and his Division Commanders, who were seeking
a advancement by flattery, his Def. Council, already
offensive in its exhibits, or by innuendoes or
lies intended to depreciate, down one or two
of his Division Commanders, who seldom went
to Camp N^o 2nd where neither amusement nor
information was obtainable.

He was placed prominently forward, in the first
instance, because he was connected by marriage
with the f. f. b. his wife being a Miss Garland

of Virginia, and then by Def. American
Council. He persisted pushing himself
at Head Quarters, regardless of the Claims
or Merits of any others, in fact he, depending
more of all others, regardless of even the
truth if it was in his way. He gained his
final position - He is a brave man, and this
with his obstinacy and Def. ambition
placed him far beyond his Merits. Such
at least as history will award him.

He was incapable of conducting a Campaign
from the evolutions of his own brain
and his jealousy of advice was so great
that really at times it seemed as if
he preferred that of the enemy rather
than to take it from one of his Subordinates,
and took later it from the opposing
Commander. A notable instance
of this characteristic is the conduct of the
Campaign against Kearsville, which he Com-
manded. For he could not have ordered

movements, more to the advantage of
the opposing forces, if he had acted
only in conformity of the wishes of Burnside
and Gen Grant. The Expedition was
such a remarkable failure, when
it should have been a success. That
those who knew of events as they happened
have attributed the fault, committed
to a desire of Langhorne, Not to succeed!
But I think they are attributable
rather to his badly balanced nature
which unfitted him for Superior
Command.

I beg leave to express my sympathy
for yourself & family in affliction

Very truly yours,

L M. Law,

Gen^l Langhorne's Mother was a Daughter of
the same blood as the wife of Gen^l Grant.
- hence the cause of the suspicion with which
some persons have regarded the "Curious" conduct
of Gen L. when he happened to be opposed to Gen^l Grant.
- Chalmers, & Lane &c.