

5-20-1888

Letter: Lafayette McLaws to Isaac R. Pennypacker, May 20, 1888

Lafayette McLaws

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Savannah Georgia

May 20. 1888

J. R. Peery Foster
Editor The Weekly Press

Dear Sir

What is the matter with the document I sent, relative to the Maryland Campaign of 1862? I have written, from your relative to it, not once, that it has been rec-

I think it far grander than "Politics", or the war now being carried on, between the parties representing "Protection for protection's sake", 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 two armies, enlisted on each side, which go as ordered by their respective leaders, with as little idea of the merits or demerits

of the questions really at issue, as did our
Arms in the field - You practice all the
arts of Strategy, make false attacks, to
Conceal the real one, have the same
Month as regular arms 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 bagpouch - but
the devastation is nevertheless just as great,
and the Consequence causes a little for the
Supporting the Cause, as did the victorious
General -

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 wayward
troops" this one of 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; he was to defend Harper,
 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, the
 illustrations, head wheat was done at Frederick's
 when Burnside occupied the Heights on the
 opposite side of the Rappahannock, neither a
 number were numerous, and under
 such was favorable circumstances - The
 Army 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 & was
 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 date
 he held it long enough, to have marked Genl
 McClellan or Genl Franklin, to have marked

their troops, so as to have worked 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 it - that at Shiloh,
 every portion of the Confederate force was
 engaged - their remnants, losses, in each
 and every command, compared with
 the numbers they had in the battle, showing
 that there was no man in reserve,
 - whereas the relations I quite show there
 in the Reserve under Johnston, 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 would have been
 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 reads as if the Waction still continued, and every opportunity which many would have taken advantage of, was lost.

It requires few 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 Ferry, and urged them the Kings Stans an assault.

For the above reasons, and because I know that public opinion is not in accord with the views 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'haery