


3-28-1871

# Wade Hampton Letter regarding memorium of General E. Lee to Colonel Charles Marshall, 1871.

Wade Hampton

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Price Nov 28<sup>th</sup> 1871

My Dear Sir

Your letter has just reached me & while the determination you have had come to cannot but be gratifying to me, I can feel to some disappointment that they did not arrive at a different conclusion. Of course I shall cheerfully undertake no task than kindness has imposed on me, but it will be almost impossible for me to do anything at all worthy of the subject or the occasion. My business here is so absorbing & so vexatious, that I cannot hope to do justice even to myself, but I shall go on immediately to prepare something. My general plan will be this. To introduce the subject by saying that the simplest language of truth is the best - to tell of the great deeds & spotless virtue of Lee. The unadorned narrative that tells his marvellous career, is all that is needed & all. Then after glancing briefly at



The  
Military portion of his career, showing in  
what estimation he would hold him  
to depict the virtues of his character. Espe-  
cially to show how brightly these virtues shone  
after his retirement from public life, & to  
hold him up not only as an example  
but as the type & representation of our kind  
civilization, in contradistinction to the French.  
I wish too to show that his whole heart  
was in our cause, & that it remained  
so till the day of his death. This has been  
about the scope of the line I have cared  
out, since I have found that no retreat  
is possible, & I hope that you can aid  
me. I did not propose any criticism on  
his military life, for as there can be but  
one opinion as to his merits there, I left  
that to his biographers, but I should like  
your opinion on that point. I saw ex-  
tracts from an article comparing you & Lee  
& Wellington, written by Gladstone, & I should  
like to see the paper if you can find it for  
me. Any memoranda you think will be useful  
do send. If possible, I will go on by the



1<sup>st</sup> June, but if my work is not ready by

that time, you can fix any day in Sept. or Oct. It will be necessary for me to go to Columbia to get some of my papers. All that can be of any use to you, shall be placed at your disposal. Such recollections as you think may assist you, I will cheerfully give. There is one point involving a matter of great delicacy, which if touched at all should be handled very carefully. It is the failure of Jackson to cross the White Oak swamp in time to aid Lee at his fight at Fairfax farm. My own conviction was & is that the delay there saved McClellan's army. I will give you all the facts about this movement when we meet & in the meantime you had better write to Maj. J. G. Barker, Charleston & to Chas. Kenable in reference to this matter. If any of White's staff can be heard from valuable information can be got in that quarter. I think it due to Lee to show that whenever his plans failed of perfect success, the fault was not with him.



There are several incidents of the  
last Campaign, which may be  
of interest & importance to you & all  
of them you shall have.

It is a matter of real regret that  
you cannot obtain access to the Con-  
gress, but the refusal to let you see  
them is in entire keeping with the  
character of the people who un-  
fortunately are custodians of them.  
Our whole history is being falsified  
& it is of the utmost consequence that  
our own people should write their  
own record. You shall hear from  
me in time to make any arrange-  
ments you desire for the meeting in  
Balt. & I hope soon to hear again  
from you. With my best wishes

I am

Very truly  
Yours  
Wm. Patterson

(at Marshall)



Col. Char. P.

Baltimore

Md