

Disloyal Union

By Rick L. Hemphill

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Disloyal Union 1862

September 12th, 1862.

5:45 pm – McClellan's Headquarters, Clarksburg, MD

From: Washington City, DC

To: Major-General McClellan

Governor Curtin Telegraphs me.

I have advices that Jackson is crossing the Potomac at Williamsport, and probably the whole rebel army will be drawn from Maryland.

Receiving nothing from Harper's Ferry or Martinsburg to-day, and positive information from Wheeling that the line is cut, corroborates the idea that the enemy is re-crossing the Potomac. Please do not let him get off without being hurt.

A. Lincoln

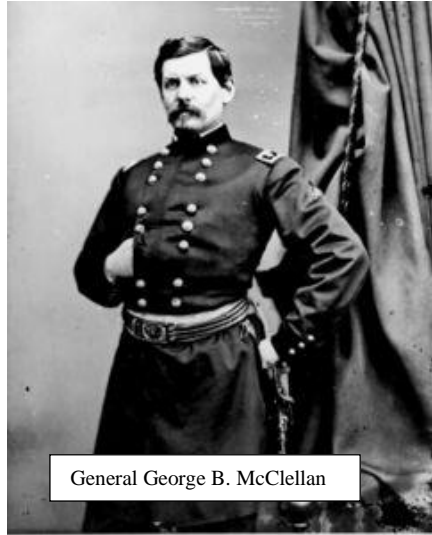
Chapter 1

Knowledge is Power

September 13th, 1862

6:30 am – On the March Toward Frederick, MD

The fog was still lying in the thickets across the swells and curves of Montgomery County, Maryland, as the murky blanket of haze fought the morning sun to stay in its place. General George B. McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, stood beside his tent and surveyed the blue columns marching into the morning mist. The noises of the camp were dying down and the rattling of the wagons and the foul yells of the mule skinnners echoed across the hills along with the clank and creak of thousands of tin cups and leather straps.



General George B. McClellan

“Isn’t it magnificent?” said General McClellan to no one in particular. “I love watching the army on the move.” It feels good to see them marching out, he thought, and under *my* orders. I will push Robert E. Lee and his Rebel invaders back to Virginia. I will fulfill my destiny and will preserve the Union with superior generalship over superior numbers. I am the ‘Hero of the Republic,’ he thought, imagining the triumphal parades down Pennsylvania Avenue, riding down Wall Street in New York, the European tour. He would dwarf that buffoon in the White House. His mind continued to race with the excitement of future accolades. He would

meet Lee in Maryland on the glorious field of battle and soon it would be over. The slaughter cannot continue indefinitely and it will be the politicians who must end this stalemate and put things back in proper order. “Thank you, your Majesty,” he said out loud, his musings of triumph to come spilling over into the present.

“Sir?” said Sergeant James Adams, suddenly rising to attention from breaking down the general’s tent.

“Nothing sergeant. As you were.”

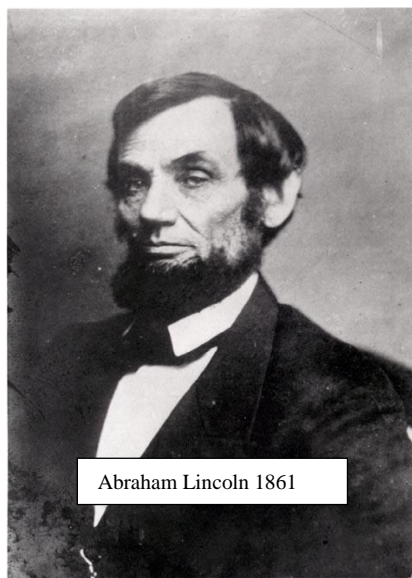
“Yes, sir.”

The army could be heard for miles, thought McClellan as he continued to savor the sounds and feelings of the moment. *My men. My army. All marching under one man, and I am that man. I will save this country, and I will not be stopped. Today or maybe tomorrow, we shall meet the enemy and push them back against the river – the mighty Potomac River – My Army of the Potomac. I cannot escape my destiny any*

more than the Rebels can escape me. Not even that buffoon in the White House can stand in my way for much longer.

8:30 am – The White House, Washington, DC

“The Buffoon in the White House,” President Abraham Lincoln, rose early and quickly busied himself with the many issues of state, some great and some small. It was often difficult to tell which was which, but he would



Abraham Lincoln 1861

use any excuse to avoid the pain of dealing with his army,

more particularly with certain generals. This earnest, and very round woman standing before him provided just such a distraction.

“Mrs. Hansen,” the president said, “your concern for our cause is inspiring to us all. Your plan to keep our soldiers pure and safe from the effects of alcohol and the other six sins of the flesh is an honorable goal.”

“And, Mr. President,” Jane Hansen interrupted. “My plan would allow us to defeat those ungodly Rebels in battle. Our men, marching forward with the good book in one hand and knowing that their purity will deflect the attacks of those dirty heathen godless men of the South will give us the victories we need.”

“Mrs., Hansen,” injected Lincoln, taking the opportunity to get a word in, “I will personally direct your letter to the War Department.” Lincoln rose and outstretched his hands ushering her toward the door. “Thank you again Mrs. Hansen, and please tell the women of the Illinois Decency League that I am certain the War Department will give your proposal the utmost consideration,” Lincoln continued as he gently, but forcefully, guided Mrs. Hanson out into the reception hall. “Why, before long our men will battle as did the biblical Sampson, needing only the jawbone of an ass. I suppose that is why we will need so many asses to defend the Union. Thank you, again for your assistance.”

Lincoln shut the office door and returned to his desk. He sat quietly for a moment and chuckled, pleased with himself for that last comment. Then his smile faded and he began to collect his thoughts, as he must respond to the Chicago women who wanted him to immediately free the slaves.

- 1. There are many reasons why men cannot agree on this issue.**
- 2. We can barely feed and clothe our soldiers much less thousands of ex-slaves.**

He stopped, put his pen down and opened his center desk drawer. Looking down he pulled a sheaf of papers and began to read:

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion---

His concentration was interrupted by a violent knocking at his door. He hurriedly replaced the papers in his desk and upon closing the drawer acknowledged, “Yes, come in.”

The door burst open and the youngest and least disciplined of his children raced into the room. Without seeming to stop his forward motion, a breathless nine-year-old Tad Lincoln exclaimed: “News from McClellan! He has entered Frederick and will soon be moving upon the Rebels!”

“Well,” said the president. “At least the men are getting a good walk. I was beginning to think I should buy them all chairs.” Lincoln lowered his head for a moment and his thoughts turned to the many lives that have already been lost in this war. He hated the violence that would be required to make the country whole again. The cost in lives and suffering may be too great for the country to bear. These losses may be the only way to purge our country and our humanity. Perhaps I will soon have the opportunity to put that paper to good use.

“Tad, be a good fellow now and get Sergeant Williams for me, will you? I need to summon Mr. Stanton and a few others on this list.” With a quick nod of his head Tad careened around the room and zoomed out into the hall as quickly as he had appeared.

“Mr. President?” asked Sergeant Nathaniel Williams after peeking around the slow moving door.

“Nate. I’m calling a meeting for 11:00 am,” said Lincoln. “Make certain everyone knows and can pull themselves away from their political intrigues. I have a very important policy announcement to discuss. One that I’m afraid will not be too popular in some circles, but one I hope will change the game plan of those who oppose us.”

Lincoln handed him a folded note for each name on the list. “See that these are delivered. Now, hurry along like you were chased by hornets.”

“Yes, sir,” said Sergeant Williams as he scurried out the door to assemble the messengers who would rush to find their quarry.

9:15 am – On the March Toward Frederick, MD

The morning fog had finally surrendered its territory to the rising sun and General George Brinton McClellan was riding alongside his troops, proud as a schoolboy basking in the moment. “Huzzah for General McClellan! Huzzah!”

General McClellan took in their cheers for a moment, and loudly returned the cheer. “Huzzah to you boys for what you are about to do. The Union is counting on you. I am counting on you.”

9:27 am – The War Department – Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton’s Office

Captain James McFarland was seated at his desk at the War Department when the messenger dispatched by Sergeant Williams arrived looking for Secretary Stanton. “The Secretary is not available,” growled the captain. “I have a message from President Lincoln for Secretary Stanton and I am to notify him of a meeting at 11:00 am,” stammered the messenger.

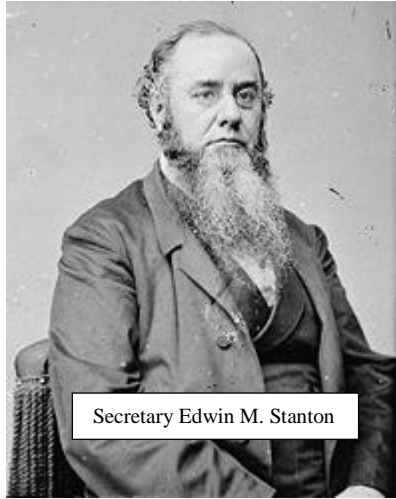
“Give it to me,” demanded the captain, whipping the paper from the young soldier’s hand. “I shall be seeing Secretary Stanton presently.”

“Yes, sir,” was all the boy could say.

“You will wait outside until I send for you,” McFarland continued, using the official and menacing tone he had carefully cultivated. The messenger saluted smartly and left.

Captain McFarland tapped the note between his fingers and wondered to himself as to its contents. For a moment he considered opening it, but realized that the Secretary would most likely share it with him anyway. He strode across the room to Stanton’s office door and quietly rapped his signature three, two, one, knock before opening the door.

Secretary of War Edwin H. Stanton slowly looked up from his desk and surveyed the young captain. McFarland had served him very well these last few months. Not only was he



Secretary Edwin M. Stanton

intelligent, unusual for such a young man so new to this administration, but he was so very well connected to the political machines in New Jersey and New York. “Come in James. What have you there?” asked Stanton, seeing the envelope and recognizing the stationery.

Captain McFarland hesitated and replied with as much scorn and distaste as he felt he could safely convey, “A message from Lincoln and a meeting at 11:00 am. It must be important, the messenger is waiting for a reply.”

Stanton took the small envelope, and carefully removed the note inside. He always enjoyed the feel of quality stationery and ran his thumb over the embossed seal pressed deeply

into the paper. “Must have been purchased by the first lady,” he mused.

The president’s wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, was generally scorned by most of Washington. She was an excellent hostess but the scars of her sarcastic wit and her ties with her Southern friends and relatives made many enemies who attacked her for her devotion to the Union and for her extravagance with White House funds during wartime.

Captain McFarland anxiously waited for Stanton to read the note.

“Hmrrrrrr,” droned Stanton. Edwin Stanton was a somber, serious and mostly humorless man who accepted his beliefs with a fanaticism that colored his every action. When preoccupied, he often emitted sounds which he was unaware were audible to others. And now he was sounding like a snoring dog, keeping time to *My Country ‘Tis of Thee*. McFarland could hardly control his impatience with the man.

Finally Stanton spoke. “It would seem we are to finally discuss abolition. It is high time! I have advocated freeing the slaves and arming them for battle against the South from the beginning.” Stanton chuckled as he continued: “I put that statement in Secretary of War Cameron’s report to Lincoln last year. Got him fired. Well, I’m Secretary of War now, so captain, tell the original gorilla that I shall be there and can’t wait to get this underway.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Captain McFarland, deeply troubled by what he had just heard.

10:18 am – The War Department – Secretary Stanton’s Office

It had been a very long morning for Captain James McFarland. He had been brooding about what Stanton had proposed – freeing and arming the slaves for the purpose of fighting the Confederate army. He, like many others,

thought that abominable idea had been put to rest. The furor over former Secretary Simon Cameron's report and his subsequent removal from office showed that the slavery issue should be left alone. Since the time of the messenger's departure a continuous barrage of visitors had come to see the Secretary. McFarland had not had a spare moment to get a message to his benefactor. Secretary Stanton would be leaving soon to attend the meeting. It was infuriating, that having gathered such valuable information, that he was now unable to communicate it.

10:28 am – The White House – Washington, DC

Lincoln had been kept busy receiving visitors for the past several hours. They were mostly office seekers and the less than successful family members of political wannabes. Everyone in Washington is either seeking a job or a pension, he thought to himself. He had never seen an entire town based upon favoritism of one form or another. "Sergeant Williams," he hollered. "Nate, do you have those papers yet? It is almost eleven o'clock!"

"Not yet, Mr. Lincoln," replied the sergeant as he rushed into the president's office, "but they will be done on time."

"Good," said Lincoln, adjusting his spectacles and rereading the proclamation yet again. "I want them to really read this. It is important."

10:43 am – Pennsylvania Avenue – Washington, DC

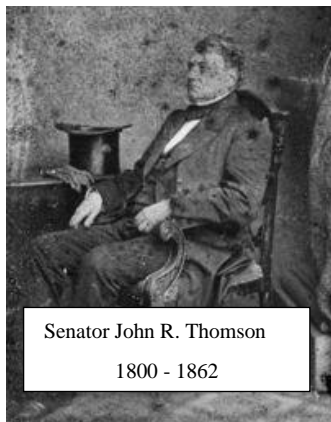
Secretary of War Stanton was walking to his meeting with the president, just up the street from the War Department. He hated to travel to see Lincoln. Usually, the president was skulking around the War Department several times a day hiding in the telegraph office awaiting dispatches and generally meddling with the operation of the war.

As he walked along the path, he passed a small, open-topped buggy with a splendidly manicured chestnut mare hitched

into a gloriously carved and meticulously engraved harness. The workmanship was unparalleled and could be admired from a distance. The designs and filigree swirled and twirled along the leather straps that were adorned with silver inlays that sparkled in the morning sun. The mare began to fidget in her harness. She was growing more agitated as he approached. He was growling again as he walked by, admiring the craftsmanship and regretting his need to pass so near it.

The horse suddenly whinnied and shied toward the street catching Stanton and the buggy by surprise. The buggy was unharmed but Stanton was now splattered with mud and refuse. Stanton quickly spat out an epithet, cursing all horses for their unpredictability. He hated walking even a short distance along the muddy, unpaved streets of Washington.

11:35 am – Constitution Avenue – Washington, DC



Captain James McFarland had locked the doors to the Secretary's office and was proceeding east toward the Capitol on Constitution Avenue. He was in a hurry and hoped to catch his mentor Senator John R. Thomson of New Jersey, a Democrat.

He arrived at the senator's office to find the doorway draped in a black bunting. Confused, he entered and found the senator's secretary placing items into a large box.

Jacob Withers, a small man who had known the senator since his days in China, was preoccupied with his duties.

He looked up briefly and remarked: "He is to be buried in Princeton. You may pay your respects on Monday."

Captain McFarland just stood with his mouth open, his brain locked on the abyss of his future. “The senator is – dead?” The captain forced the words in flat disbelief.

“Oh, I thought you knew. Yes it was very sudden. He died yesterday, the 12th. Services will be Monday, at the—,” and with that the captain turned and walked out the door and down the steps into the street.

Captain McFarland was beginning to finally feel the loneliness of his predicament. Washington was a cruel place and as the pedestrians passed him by, he looked back toward the Capitol. The building was again under construction and shrouded in scaffolding. Its state of disrepair appeared to mock him. Lincoln freeing the slaves was bad enough, but now the man who procured his military commission, his current job, and who had provided him with financial assistance was now gone. He had been funneling information to the senator for many months now, and it had been far more lucrative than he could have imagined.

He had to tell someone about the cabinet meeting! He had to create a new relationship. But with whom? He began walking first up one street and then down another, as if his feet would pump new ideas and information up to his brain. Then, his mind cleared and he knew what to do. The senator had introduced him to General George B. McClellan at a party hosted by Senator James Bayard of Delaware. Senator Thomson had referred to the general as his very dear friend and Senator Bayard as his closest ally. He was certain of McClellan’s opposition to freeing the slaves. Senator Bayard had been too willing to let the South go peacefully and was under constant suspicion. He would know what to do with this information. And who better to ultimately court than the commander of the Army of the Potomac?

12:45 pm - Pennsylvania Avenue in Front of the War Department – Washington, DC

Captain McFarland rushed back to the War Department to implement his new plan and he ran into Secretary Stanton on the front steps. “Captain, it’s wonderful, I didn’t think the gorilla had it in him! Quickly! Inside! I can’t tell you out here.” The two men hurried inside, the sound of their footsteps echoing in the halls, the short and very bearded Stanton in the lead followed by the 6-foot 3-inch mustachioed McFarland trying to keep up. It seemed to the captain that it took hours for Stanton to unlock the office, but finally, the jingling of keys and coin stopped and the door swung open with a creak he hadn’t remembered from before.

“Sit, sit captain,” said Stanton, as he settled himself into his chair. “Lincoln will issue a proclamation of emancipation as soon as McClellan presents him with a victory. And judging from the dispatches that have been coming in this morning, that could be very soon.

“The assembled group was not entirely in favor of the idea but I have the president’s personal assurance that he will do this. It is a timid step from a timid man. A bit piecemeal at first, but as the war progresses, it will become complete. We will squash this rebellion and use their own former slaves against them to do it,” boasted Stanton. “Well, captain?”

Captain McFarland felt the room closing around him. He could not process what he had just heard. Had he been able to see himself in a mirror he would have realized how out of control he looked. His eyes were almost glazed and had it not been for the hair on his upper lip Stanton could have seen the sweat gathering there. He overcame his shock quickly enough to offer a feeble reply. “Excellent, that’s what we’ve been hoping for. Now I must get back to work,” he said much too hastily. “I will go check the dispatches. Perhaps we do have a victory in the making.”

Stanton nodded in agreement. As he watched his young assistant walk out the door, he began to assess the young man's actions. Lincoln's Washington was a swirling cauldron of intrigue and shifting loyalties. As Stanton looked around the office, he pondered the loyalties of the captain. He knew the boy was tied to Senator Thomson, but he had better be watched more closely now. Stanton knew a thing or two about intrigue. After all, hadn't he gotten to be Secretary of War by sabotaging the prior Secretary? He was very good at this political business, and knew that in politics mistakes could be fatal. Had he made a mistake just now? Time would tell.

1:00 pm – General McClellan's Headquarters Frederick, MD

McClellan's headquarters was awash in fevered activity. McClellan himself was excited and was displaying a confidence and fierceness of action that few had ever seen in him. It was only an hour ago that a copy of General Robert E. Lee's Special Orders No. 191 had been found wrapped around three cigars and delivered to McClellan. Because of the fortuitousness of this discovery, he now knew the disposition of Lee's forces for the next four days. He was issuing orders to move his troops beyond Frederick to drive the Confederates, now invading his Union, back to Virginia. He was in excellent spirits and congratulated himself upon his good fortune. A commanding general could not wish for a more important piece of information than the battle plans of his enemies. He now knew where he could safely initiate an attack and when to hold back. He would soon have more of that kind of luck than he realized.

1:33 pm – The War Department – Telegraph Office

Abraham Lincoln was sitting in his usual corner of the War Department telegraph office, slowly reading the mountain of dispatches flowing into and out of Washington. He was tired and was always exhausted after dealing with the endless flow

of citizens wishing to be cured of the open palm. All he needed was a victory. And with all his legendary administrative skills McClellan seemed unable to claim victory over anything but paperwork. Yet here Lincoln sat waiting for some glimmer of generalship from his commander, some spark that resembled, however faintly, the boldness of Thomas J. Jackson, or the cunning of Robert E. Lee. Perhaps McClellan had made a decision. Orders were flowing from “Little Mac,” as he was known because of his diminutive stature, and the army was beginning to move from Frederick. Clearly something was about to happen.

I hope you enjoyed the first 14 pages. Please purchase the book and enjoy the rest of the story.

Thank You

Rick L. Hemphill