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MEMOIR

OF THE

SERVICES OF MORRIS S. MILLER,

MAJOR IN THE QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT AND BREVET BRIGADIER GENERAL UNITED STATES ARMY.

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I entered the Military Academy at West Point in 1830; graduated in 1834; appointed Brevet Second Lieutenant, Third Regiment Artillery, on 1st July, 1834; promoted to Second Lieutenant on 28th December, 1835; to First Lieutenant 19th August, 1837; to Captain in the Quartermaster's Department 13th September, 1845; to Captain in the Third Artillery 11th May, 1846; to Major in the Quartermaster's Department 19th September, 1861; to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel 13th March, 1865; to Brevet Colonel 13th March, 1865, and to Brevet Brigadier General 13th March, 1865, these three brevets conferred "for faithful and meritorious services in the Quartermaster's Department during the war." I have therefore been *in continuous service thirty-one years*,* and have received three brevets for faithful and meritorious service.

In September, 1834, I joined my regiment, the Third Artillery, at Fort Monroe, Va.; went with a detachment from that post to Florida, in the spring of 1835, in anticipation of the Florida war; was stationed at Fort King when the murder of Charley O. Mathla (Indian chief) took place, which was the signal given by Powell (Osceola) for the outbreak of that war. Served at Fort King with a single company of about forty men during the time of the massacre there of Lieutenant Constantine Smith, the Indian agent, the sutler and his two clerks, by Osceola; went out with a party of six men; recovered and buried the dead. Dale's massacre occurred at about the same time, he being on the march to reinforce Fort King, and within forty miles of it when his command was cut off. Was besieged at Fort King for two months by the Indians, before succor arrived with General Gaines, who came from New Orleans and buried the dead at Dale's battle-ground. Was afterwards on the recruiting service in Raleigh, Wilmington, and Smithville, North Carolina; on ordnance duty at Watervliet Arsenal, New York; Alleghany Arsenal, Pa., and Fort Monroe Arsenal, Va. Served under General Wool on the northern frontier, at Plattsburg and in its vicinity, during the disturbances known as the "Patriot war." Assisted Colonel Worth in organizing the Eighth Infantry at Sackett's Harbor, New York; was appointed aid to General Macomb; went with him to Fort King, Florida, to

* Brevet Second Lieutenant one year and a half; Second Lieutenant one year and a half; First Lieutenant eight years; Captain Quartermaster's Department sixteen years; Major Quartermaster's Department four years.

treat with the Indians for a cessation of hostilities. On the death of General Macomb I joined Ringgold's battery of Light Artillery at Fort McHenry; served at Fort Moultrie with my regiment in 1844 and 1845, and often drilled the battalion in which were Lieutenants W. T. Sherman, T. W. Sherman, J. F. Reynolds, and George H. Thomas—since Generals. I was appointed Assistant Quartermaster, with the rank of Captain, while at Fort Moultrie, and went to the Mexican war: served at Point Isabel, Brazos island, and Brownsville as Assistant Quartermaster: was in the hospital at Matamoras for two months, having a sun-stroke from exposure in personally superintending the ferry from Fort Brown to Matamoras. Was sent North, and served afterwards, for a short time, in New York city and Philadelphia. Returned to the war on General Scott's line, and served up to the city of Mexico; was for a short time Chief Quartermaster in Mexico, by the orders of General Worth. Served in Texas two years, and in Savannah two years: three years in California and Oregon, and in the Quartermaster General's office five years, in charge of the Clothing branch of that office, being for the same period the only disbursing Quartermaster in Washington. At the commencement of the war all the arrangements for providing for the arrival of troops destined for the defence of the city, and for receiving supplies of all descriptions, fell to my lot, and it was not until after I had provided for all the Regulars, and transported several regiments of Volunteers from Annapolis to this point, that my responsibilities were shared by other officers of the Department.

The massacre at Baltimore took place on Friday, 19th April, 1861: on Saturday, the 20th, I received orders from General Scott to proceed to Annapolis in order to forward the Volunteers from Massachusetts and New York, which were supposed to be there on their way for the relief of this city. On the 20th I repaired to the railroad depot and found that the trains were interrupted, and I could get no satisfactory answers to my telegrams to Baltimore calling for the means of transportation to take me to Annapolis. A train at length started for Baltimore, and I went in it. On arriving, the disturbances were still going on, and the agent of the railroad considered it necessary to conceal me from view, for fear of the consequences to his depot had I been discovered. After considerable conversation (which was conducted in writing for fear of being overheard) I secured a locomotive and one car, and started for Annapolis direct, arriving at 9, p. m. No troops had reached that point: and, on conferring with Commander Blake and Governor Hicks, I found there was great apprehension entertained that, if the troops were to land, the riot of the day before at Baltimore would be repeated at Annapolis. The governor was extremely anxious to send dispatches to the Secretary of War, but, as the trains were not running with any regularity, and the country between Annapolis and Washington was swarming with armed parties opposed to the Government, the matter was hazardous, and he consulted me as to the best means of sending the dispatches. I offered my locomotive and car, presuming he would send a member of his Staff, several of whom were present. After some delay, as no bearer was forthcoming, I offered to carry the dispatches myself. Meanwhile the patrols at Annapolis Junction, having suspected that some Government matter was going on,

turned a switch, and on arriving there, at midnight, my locomotive was thrown from the track, and I was detained until 12, m., on Sunday, the 21st. Being obliged to remain inside the car at the Junction, a *quasi* prisoner, surrounded by a large crowd of disaffected people, some of them armed. But for the adroitness of the conductor in answering the inquiries of the crowd, and in keeping all persons from entering the car, the object of my trip might have been discovered, and I should probably have received rough treatment, being alone, with \$1,000 in specie and important dispatches. After getting under way and proceeding a few miles, another delay of two hours occurred, while waiting on a side track for another train to pass. While thus waiting the conductor was again called upon to exert his skill in concealing the purpose of the journey, as an officer of a mounted troop demanded who was in the car, adding that if he had some of his men with him he would ascertain who it was to a certainty. I reached Washington on Sunday afternoon, the 21st of April, perhaps the most gloomy Sunday ever experienced in the city. Having ineffectually searched for the Secretary of War, I delivered my dispatch to Mr. Lincoln in person, and reported to General Scott as soon as he could be seen. His disappointment on hearing that the troops had not reached Annapolis was extreme. On Monday, the 22d, I started again for Annapolis, with the assurance from General Scott that if I succeeded in getting the Volunteers through, his commendation should follow. I was also informed that another Quartermaster had resigned on the spot, rather than undertake this duty; and that Colonel Lander (whom I had never seen) was to join me. I arrived at Annapolis Junction without having discovered Colonel Lander; took a seat alone in the car for Annapolis, and was ejected by the conductor on the plea that no one was permitted to go except the hands necessary to work the train. A company of armed men, having finished their drill in a neighboring field, came to the station house, and, on conversing with them, I discovered that they were an organized body adverse to the Government, and fully determined to oppose the march of United States troops through Maryland. Being in citizens' dress, I mingled freely with them, and they asserted that, as the blood of their own citizens had been shed in Baltimore by the United States troops, they would allow no more to pass over the soil of Maryland. I witnessed here the arrest of an individual whose face was familiar to me, but whose name I could not recall. He was endeavoring, like myself, to reach Annapolis, but had been discovered to be on Government business, and was sent back; he proved to be the Commissary of Subsistence of the Seventh Regiment, New York, but, at the time, I suspected him to be Colonel Lander, for whom I was still searching. A quiet-looking citizen at my elbow, much engaged in reading the newspaper, was disturbed by the confusion created by this arrest, and asked me if I knew who the arrested man was. I replied that I thought it was Colonel Lander, as I had reason to suppose he was in the neighborhood. We entered into a guarded conversation, and I discovered that he was also anxious to reach Annapolis. I proposed to him to walk there, and, while discussing the matter, a train from Baltimore arrived, and I persuaded him to return in it to Bladensburg, where I had friends and might procure a private conveyance. I was still uncer-

tain as to who my companion might be, and to his sometimes searching questions I gave reticent answers. He asked me if I had ever been in Washington; if I had ever heard of an officer named Miller in the Purchasing Department. I answered evasively; and, in return, asked him if he had ever been in California, and if I had not seen him there. This kind of fencing was kept up until we reached Bladensburg, and, after leaving the car, my companion addressed me thus: "You are now among your friends, and perhaps you would like to know my name in order to introduce me. I am *Colonel Lander*." To which I rejoined, "And I am *Major Miller*, whom you were to meet." A hearty laugh ensued at the mutual manœuvres of each to prevent being discovered by the other. Arrived at my friend's house, a neighbor, owning a buggy and horses, was called in; he came, and assured us that further progress towards Annapolis would certainly eventuate in our being arrested; that every avenue was guarded by hostile troops, and that it would be impossible to evade them. Under these circumstances, I proposed to him to guide us until we came to the first body of armed men, and then to leave us to our fate, we agreeing to lay aside our hitherto concealed weapons. To this he consented. As an additional precaution, we destroyed all papers and orders, then in our possession, which might give information to our expected captors. Colonel Lander and myself drove in the buggy, while our gentlemanly guide, on horseback, opened for us the numerous gates on the old mail road to Annapolis. Our guide met an acquaintance who had just heard that *an armistice had been agreed upon for a short time*. This was news to us, but proved useful, for, when within eight miles of Annapolis, the guard appeared, consisting of eight or ten mounted men, with rebel badges and well armed; they hailed us, and we gave them to understand as much of our purpose as we deemed proper, referring also to the news of the *armistice* just received. In the commander of the guard I recognised the same individual who had endeavored to discover me when I was in the car on my way to Washington, and he was not a little surprised when I called him by name, and repeated to him his conversation with the conductor held on the day before. This guard took us in to Annapolis, and delivered us as prisoners to the Governor. They were not a little chagrined, however, on discovering in me a bearer of dispatches sent by the Governor himself to Washington; and they were necessitated to leave the town themselves, as our troops had arrived, several steamers being then at the wharf, and some of the force already landed. I believe that I am justified in saying that I am the first officer of the Quartermaster's Department engaged in preparation for the defense of this city, and I am confident that I was the first taken prisoner by the rebels.

Agreeably to my orders from General Scott, I immediately set about procuring the means of transportation for General Butler's Massachusetts Volunteers and the Seventh New York, under Colonel Lefferts; and, on the next day, the 23d April, the movement towards Washington began. In a day or two the Rhode Island troops, under General Sprague and Burnside, arrived, and every means (pitiful as they were) of transportation which the neighborhood afforded was purchased and furnished, and I had the satisfaction of being mainly instrumental, as Quartermaster, in forwarding to Washington the first

Regiments of Volunteers that arrived for the relief of the city in its first dark hour. For this service I have since received the commendation of General Scott, as promised, and, for this and other faithful and meritorious service during the war, the approbation of my Government in the bestowal upon me of three brevets.

I will add that between the years 1861 and 1864 there passed through my hands \$19,695,070 45—nearly twenty millions of dollars—involving more than fifteen thousand vouchers, some of these vouchers being rolls containing more than two hundred individual payments.

The instructions of General Scott referred to herein, and General Townsend's statement of the services rendered in conformity thereto, together with the endorsements thereon, are appended.

MORRIS S. MILLER,

Major Quartermaster, Brev. Brig. General.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 3, 1863.*

Copy of instructions from General Scott.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

WASHINGTON, *April 20, 1861.*

CAPTAIN: You will proceed rapidly to Annapolis to afford all facilities in your power to volunteers from Massachusetts and New York, supposed to be there *en route* to the city of Washington. If cars of the right gauge can be obtained from the Baltimore and Washington railroad, you will obtain as many as practicable for the transportation of those troops hither in one or more trips. Consult the naval commander on that station, and if he deems a detachment of troops necessary to defend the Naval School, the fort, and any United States vessels which may be there, you will next see the commanders of the regiments of volunteers, and request that one, or both of them together, leave the number of companies needed for those defensive purposes. On the arrival of a sufficient naval force at Annapolis for its defence, any detachment left behind will be ordered to join its Regiment or Regiments.

I write by command of Lieut. Gen. Scott.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Asst. Adj't General.

To Capt. M. S. MILLER,

Asst. Quartermaster, Washington, D. C.

Copy of Colonel Townsend's statement and endorsements thereon.

WASHINGTON, *March 5, 1863.*

SIR: On the 20th of April, 1861, (the day after the Baltimore massacre,) as chief of General Scott's staff, I addressed you, by the General's order, instructions to go to Annapolis and forward such troops as might have arrived there to this city.

On the 22d of April, you having gone to Annapolis, and having returned to Washington, I repeated those instructions, and you pro-

ceeded to Annapolis. At the time of your second trip all communication had been interrupted, and you were forced to make your way through armed enemies as best you could.

By your exertions orders were communicated to the troops, which had arrived at Annapolis, to march to Washington; and aided by you, as Quartermaster, the Seventh New York Regiment, a Massachusetts regiment, and one or more Pennsylvania Regiments, succeeded in reaching this city.

On your returning and reporting to General Scott, after accomplishing this duty, the General highly commended your services, through which the first troops that arrived for the relief of the Capital were enabled to come through.

I am, &c., &c.,

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Ass't Adjt General.

Major MORRIS S. MILLER,
Quartermaster U. S. A., Washington, D. C.

Copy of endorsements on the foregoing.

I consider the services of Major Miller, as truly set forth within by Colonel Townsend, to have been highly meritorious, and well worthy of special reward.

WINFIELD SCOTT.

I have a recollection of the services rendered by Major Miller, at the time specified by Colonel Townsend, and know that his energy in the performance of the important business intrusted to him was highly commended. Major Miller has always been assiduous in the performance of his duty.

L. THOMAS, *Adj't Gen'l.*

MARCH 5, 1863.

Major M. S. Miller has held a position in this city as an officer of the Quartermaster's Department since I have been in charge of the bureau. He has had heavy money accountability, having disbursed very large sums for the equipment and supply of the army. I have found him always a faithful and zealous officer, prompt in the performance of every duty committed to him.

M. C. MEIGS,
Quartermaster General.

I take great pleasure in endorsing all that is said of Major Miller by Colonel Townsend, as I was present at Annapolis when he arrived there, and I would be glad to hear of his having received a reward for his services.

A. E. BURNSIDE, *Major General.*

SECOND COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE,
January, 31, 1866.

Brevet Brig. Gen. M. S. MILLER,
Quartermaster's Department.

MY DEAR SIR:

In reply to your note of this date I take great pleasure in saying that I have known you, for more than a dozen years, as one of the most prompt, correct, and faithful disbursing officers of the Quartermaster's Department. Your accounts have been kept and rendered in a manner creditable to yourself, and entirely satisfactory to the accounting officers of the Treasury.

Truly and respectfully, yours,
 J. M. BRODHEAD.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, THIRD AUDITOR'S OFFICE,
February 2, 1866.

General MORRIS S. MILLER,
Quartermaster U. S. A.

SIR:

Since the receipt of your letter I have had a thorough examination made of the records of this office, with reference to the manner in which you have discharged your duties as quartermaster and disbursing officer of the United States army.

From those records it appears that your services as disbursing officer commenced in 1836 "in the field" in Florida. All your accounts from that period were rendered with remarkable promptitude and great accuracy, judging from the very trifling differences found in the official adjustment of your accounts.

Your disbursements during the rebellion, and while you were stationed in this city, amounted to about twenty millions of dollars, and consist largely of referred claims, originating in various and distant Military Departments, involving nice points of law, and constructions of the Army Regulations, and consequently were not paid by the local officers, but sent to this city for decision and adjustment. The examination of your accounts, which are perfectly vouched, is now completed; and after the most rigid scrutiny by Experts, in this office, it is found that an amount less than twenty dollars is disallowed out of the twenty millions thus disbursed, being the only case of the kind within the knowledge of this office.

It is proper for me to state that this fact is the best evidence of the masterly manner in which the important duties committed to your care have been performed; of your eminent fitness for the position you hold, and of your superior claims for a higher one should you desire it.

Very truly, yours,
 JOHN WILSON, *Auditor.*

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