

Chapter 1 : Montgomery C. Meigs, Engineer of the Capitol | Architect of the Capitol

Montgomery Cunningham Meigs (/ ɛ̃ m ɛ̃ ɛ̃ z /; May 3, - January 2,) was a career United States Army officer and civil engineer, who served as Quartermaster General of the U.S. Army during and after the American Civil War.

August 21, Gen. It was Meigs who recommended that the U. In the summer of , Meigs briefly took on another role, that of commander of troops in the field. Grant brought in thousands of reinforcements from the defenses of Washington DC. Washington was heavily fortified with forts and heavy artillery, but after Grant pulled out a thousands of the soldiers manning these defenses, there were few left to defend the city. Grant ordered the Union 6th Corps north to reinforce Washington, and the race was on to see if Early would get there before the 6th Corps arrived. Early was held up a day or so while he defeated a smaller Union force at the Battle of Monocacy on July 9th. Jubal Early CSA Washington but the battle did buy some time to organize the defense of the capitol while the 6th Corps made its way north. Some infantry and cavalry were still present but not nearly enough. They were joined by regiments of the Veterans Reserve Corps, soldiers who had been wounded or ill and not fit for the rigors of active campaigning but could still perform in support roles. Meigs was ordered to report for possible field command to go with his quartermaster duties. There was some fighting on July 11th, at about the same time that the 6th Corps was beginning to arrive. Concluding that an all out attempt to take Washington would have resulted in unacceptably high casualties, Early withdrew. General Meigs filed this report on his eclectic division of soldiers and civilians in the fighting around Washington: On Sunday, the 10th, arms were procured from the arsenal; they were distributed on that day and on Monday. Such an organization had been made over a year since, but the arms then issued having been recalled, the organization in the departments of Washington and Alexandria had not been kept up. Lieutenant-Colonel Greene, chief quartermaster of the Military Department of Washington, however, under instructions from Major-General Augur, had retained the arms issued to the men employed under his direction, and had preserved the military organization. The arrival without wagons or horses of portions of the Sixth Corps from the Army of the Potomac, and of the Nineteenth Corps from New Orleans, requiring new outfits of transportation, made it necessary to leave in the city a large portion of the wagon-masters, operatives, and teamsters, and reduce the movable force in the Washington depot to about 1, men, of which 1, were placed under the immediate command of Brig. Rucker, and with them I reported to Major-General McCook about sunset on the 11th; and was directed to march to Fort Slocum and place the men as might be advised by Colonel Haskin, commanding the forts on the right. Colonel Haskin supplied a staff officer to point out in the darkness the line of rifle-pits extending from Fort Stevens to Fort Totten; about one mile in length. The men were posted therein and lay upon their arms all night. The next morning, 12th, I received Special Orders, No. Farnsworth, Twelfth Veteran Reserves, and afterward by Colonel Alexander, of the Second District of Columbia Volunteers, a provisional brigade of these regiments, organized from the hospital and convalescent and distribution camps of the Department of Washington. It was placed in reserve and bivouacked in rear of Fort Slocum in the center of the line. Army, and though at first ordered to report to me the order was soon afterward revoked. Finding, however, that the garrison of Fort Slocum was not as strong as it should be, I ordered Colonel Price, then commanding the Provisional Brigade, to ascertain the number of artillerymen in his command and to send them to report to Colonel Haskin at Fort Slocum. The garrison thus received a re-enforcement of trained artillerymen. The division thus organized on the morning of the 12th July, had an effective strength present for duty of 4, men and officers with one section of light artillery, which was placed in one of the trenches on the left. During the 12th the enemy made their appearance in front of Fort Stevens, and a portion of the command, which had been placed on the skirmish or picket-line, was engaged. Four hundred men were detached from the command on the 12th to be placed on the picket-line by staff officers of Major-General McCook. On the 14th these two regiments, by order of Major, General McCook, returned to my command. The forces of this division had been hastily organized and sent to the field in an emergency and without baggage. They were supplied during the 12th and 13th with shelter-tents, blankets, and such equipage as was necessary to their comfort and health while on duty in the trenches. Major Darling, of the Seventh

Michigan Cavalry, commanding cavalry outpost, with a force of about cavalry, operated in front of the extreme right toward Baltimore turnpike and railroad. He sent me information on the afternoon of the 12th that his force had been driven in by a strong body of cavalry and artillery, which interrupted the travel for a time and injured the railroad to a small extent. The day was hot and dusty, and the movements of the cavalry could be traced from the forts by the columns of dust which they raised. The enemy came as far as the Maryland Agricultural College, and when they retired were pursued by our cavalry, who being in inferior force and without artillery, appeared to be repulsed in their attack. After relinquishing the command of the division to General Paine, I spent some hours in riding over the scene of the conflict and visiting the bivouacs and line of battle of the enemy in front of Fort Stevens. From the extent of ground occupied by them they appeared to have a strong force within supporting distance of the skirmishers, which alone seemed to be engaged. Company A reported at his headquarters in the field and remained on duty until the brigade was relieved. Companies E and F were, at the request of Brigadier-General Slough, commanding at Alexandria, detailed and placed on picket duty around that city. The other companies were placed in reserve at the wood-yard, drilling constantly, and held in readiness to defend the public property. Lee, assistant quartermaster, at Alexandria, were also organized and placed on duty. I have to express my satisfaction with the conduct of both the soldiers and civilians who were under my command. Though hastily organized and equipped they moved promptly at the call of danger. I had on no occasion to inflict punishment or administer reproof during the time they were under my observation, and their services were useful and important in the defense of the capital, seriously threatened by a considerable rebel army under skillful and experienced leaders. Those who were on duty in the city relieved at least an equal number of trained soldiers and enabled them to go to the front, while those who were placed in the intrenchments extended the line of battle fully a mile to the right of the center of attack, and by their presence and bearing, standing upon the parapets and exposing themselves, perhaps, more than more experienced soldiers would have done, they convinced the enemy that the fortifications of Washington were not unmanned.

Chapter 2 : Meigs, Montgomery | calendrierdelascience.com

Lincoln & His Quartermaster General. The Story of Montgomery Cunningham Meigs From the Quartermaster Review, May-June By LT. COL. Herbert A. Hall Q.M.C.

Additional Information In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: A Biography of M. Meigs, has at last appeared. Williams is a notable exceptionâ€”have more than mentioned him. Quartermaster generals, like the work of the Quartermaster Corps, are usually mentioned in histories of war only when they fail to function well. Another figure in a key position at the time who has been even more neglected than Meigs was Joseph B. Taylor, Commissary General for Subsistence from to His administrative ability, self-reliance, and complete honesty recommended him to Lincoln and Seward for the post of Quartermaster General, but it is certain that Secretary of War Cameron would have preferred a more compliant candidate. One can only speculate on the results of such an appointment. Meigs do not often come along. He moved with speed and energy to expand and organize the affairs of the Department. Procurement methods were often very lax; huge profits and even outright graft were common. Weigley covers in detail the fantastic situation under General Fremont in St. Louis which Meigs found when he took command. Large contracts were being let to favored dealers at very high prices. These men then bought supplies. Almost anything they offered was accepted, whether it met requirements or not. Profits of 40 per cent were not uncommon. Meigs took vigorous steps to correct the situation before a Congressional investigation made the scandal public. He insisted on public announcement of requirements except in the most extreme emergencies, and was liberal with reprimands for paying too high prices. At the same time he was very careful never to deny Army commanders the right to purchase any supplies they needed. Acceptance of inferior supplies was also common when Meigs took over, and he improved this situation by insisting on adequate inspection by trained personnel. It was typical of his ingenuity that, when he learned of the large number of unserviceable animals being accepted because there were not enough experienced men to inspect them, he urged the use of disabled cavalry and artillery officers as inspectors. Early in the war shortage of suitable cloth for uniforms was critical and soldiers were often in rags. Though there were violent complaints from the mills in New England that he was ruining native industry, Meigs had suitable cloth purchased in Europe until the

Chapter 3 : Russell Weigley - Wikipedia

Title devised by Library staff. Notation on card with photograph: M. C. Meigs, March , Q.M. Genl. Civil War. The above is what is written on the picture in my grandmother's handwriting.

He was the son of Dr. He enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania in , the same year he began to practice medicine in Georgia. Charles Meigs received his MD from the University of Pennsylvania in , and that summer he moved his family—which now included one-year-old Montgomery—to Philadelphia and established a practice there. Montgomery Meigs, caught up in the nationalistic fervor of the time, wished to serve in the army. He was among the top three students in French and mathematics, and did well in history. Artillery, but most of his army service was with the Corps of Engineers, in which he worked on important engineering projects. He also served under the command of then- Lt. Lee to make navigational improvements on the Mississippi River. His favorite prewar engineering project was the Washington Aqueduct , which he supervised from to It involved the construction of the monumental Union Arch Bridge across Cabin John Creek , designed by Alfred Rives, which for 50 years remained the longest single-span masonry arch in the world. Meigs in March In the fall of , as a result of a disagreement over procurement contracts, Meigs incurred the ill will of the Secretary of War , John B. Floyd , and was banished to Tortugas in the Gulf of Mexico to construct fortifications at that place and at Key West. This included Fort Jefferson, Florida. Upon the resignation of Floyd a few months later, Meigs was recalled to his work on the aqueduct at Washington. Seward with drawing up a plan for the relief of Fort Pickens , Florida, by means of a secret expedition. In April , together with Lieutenant David D. Porter of the Navy, they carried out the expedition, embarking under orders from the President without the knowledge of either the Secretary of the Navy or the Secretary of War. On May 14, , Meigs was appointed colonel , 11th U. Infantry, and on the following day, promoted to brigadier general and Quartermaster General of the Army. Meigs established a reputation for being efficient, hard-driving, and scrupulously honest. He molded a large and somewhat diffuse department into a great tool of war. He was one of the first to fully appreciate the importance of logistical preparations in military planning, and under his leadership, supplies moved forward and troops were transported over long distances with ever-greater efficiency. Meigs, one of the ablest graduates of the Military Academy, was kept from the command of troops by the inestimably important services he performed as Quartermaster General. Perhaps in the military history of the world there never was so large an amount of money disbursed upon the order of a single man The aggregate sum could not have been less during the war than fifteen hundred million dollars, accurately vouched and accounted for to the last cent. Secretary of State William H. He was brevetted to major general on July 5, A staunch Unionist, Meigs detested the Confederacy. His feelings led directly to the establishment of Arlington National Cemetery. On July 16, , Congress passed legislation authorizing the U. Army Quartermaster General in charge of this program. Meigs ordered that an examination of eligible sites be made for the establishment for a large new national military cemetery. Within weeks, his staff reported that Arlington Estate was the most suitable property in the area. It was also the home of Robert E. Lee, future General-in-Chief of the Confederacy, and denying Lee use of his home after the war was a valuable political consideration. The Union supply system, even as it penetrated deeper into the South, maintained its efficiency. Historians credit the achievements to Meigs. They operated out of sixteen major depots, which formed the basis of the system of procurement and supply throughout the war. As the war expanded, operation of these depots became much more complex, with an overlapping and interweaving relationship between the army and government operated factories, private factories, and numerous middlemen. The purchase of goods and services through contracts supervised by the quartermasters accounted for most of federal military expenditures, apart from the wages of the soldiers. The quartermasters supervised their own soldiers, and cooperated closely with state officials, manufacturers and wholesalers trying to sell directly to the army; and representatives of civilian workers looking for higher pay at government factories. The complex system was closely monitored by congressmen anxious to ensure that their districts won their share of contracts. The system grew in efficiency to the point Union troops on long marches would simply throw away excess

knapsacks, bedrolls, overcoats, and other pieces of clothing and equipment that they felt were weighing them down, fully confident that they would be resupplied at some point in the near future. Meigs was part of a three-man patrol which ran into a three-man Confederate patrol. Meigs was killed, one man was captured, and one man escaped. To the end of his life, Meigs believed that his son had been murdered after being captured—despite evidence to the contrary. Stanton attended the interment. Meigs stood at the front door of the house for the rest of the deathwatch. He alone decided who was admitted to the house. When Lincoln died at 7: Meigs played a critical role in developing Arlington National Cemetery, both during the Civil War and afterward. By May 31, more than 2, burials had occurred in the cemetery, and Meigs ordered that a white picket fence be constructed around the burial grounds. Although Meigs had not intended to collect the remains of Confederate war dead, the inability to identify remains meant that both Union and Confederate dead were interred below the cenotaph. The Civil War Unknowns Monument consists of two long, light grey granite slabs, with the shorter ends formed by sandwiching a smaller slab between the longer two. On the west face was an inscription describing the number of dead in the vault below, and honoring the "unknowns of the Civil War". A walk led east to the flower garden, and another west to the road. Sod was laid around the memorial, and planting beds filled with annual plants emplaced. Meigs made additional major changes to the cemetery in the s. In , he ordered that a "Sylvan Hall"—a series of three cruciform tree plantings, one inside the other—be planted in the "Field of the Dead" in what is now Section Patent Office building had suffered a massive fire in It was torn down and rebuilt in , but the work went very slowly. Meigs ordered that stone columns, pediments , and entablatures which had been saved from the Patent Office be used to construct the Temple of Fame. The Temple was a round, Greek Revival , temple-like structure with Doric columns supporting a central dome. Inscribed on the pediment supporting the dome were the names of great Americans such as George Washington , Ulysses S. Grant, Abraham Lincoln, and David Farragut. A year after it was built, the names of Union Civil War generals were carved into its columns. The Temple of Fame was demolished in Meigs became a permanent resident of the District of Columbia after the war. As Quartermaster General after the Civil War, Meigs supervised plans for the new War Department building constructed between and , the National Museum constructed in , the extension of the Washington Aqueduct constructed in , and for a hall of records constructed in From to , he made another visit to study the organization of European armies, this time with nephew and Army officer Montgomery M. Macomb assigned as aide-de-camp. He was a regent of the Smithsonian Institution , a member of the American Philosophical Society , and one of the earliest members of the National Academy of Sciences. Pension Building to [edit] Following the end of the Civil War, the US Congress passed legislation that greatly extended the scope of pension coverage for both veterans and their survivors and dependents, notably their widows and orphans. This greatly increased the number of staff needed to administer the new benefits system. More than 1, clerks were required, and a new building was needed to house them. Meigs was chosen to design and construct the new building, now the National Building Museum. He broke away from the established Greco-Roman models that had been the basis of government buildings in Washington, D. The white tomb of Montgomery C. To the left is the sarcophagus Meigs designed for his son, John shown in bas relief. To the right is a marker above the graves of his father and grandfather, who were reinterred next to him. Because of the way the 28 sections are modified and mixed up, only somewhat careful examination reveals the frieze to be the same figures repeated over and over. The sculpture includes infantry, navy, artillery, cavalry, and medical components, as well as a good deal of the supply and quartermaster functions. When Philip Sheridan was asked to comment on the building, his reply echoed the sentiment of many of the Washington establishment of the day, that the only thing that he could find wrong with the building was that it was fireproof. A similar quote is also attributed to William T. Sherman , so the story might well be apocryphal. Death[edit] Meigs contracted a cold on December 27, Within a few days, it turned into pneumonia. Meigs died at home at 5: General orders issued at the time of his death declared, "the Army has rarely possessed an officer

Chapter 4 : Montgomery C. Meigs - Wikipedia

Appointed Quartermaster General in May , during the Civil War, General Meigs was an efficient, hard-driving and scrupulously honest. He molded a large and somewhat diffuse department into a great tool of war.

In one corner of the room, into which the Quartermaster General had moved only that morning, a few logs smoldered in the fireplace, fighting a losing battle with the raw January air. People scurried up and down Seventeenth Street with their coat collars turned up and their heads hunched down, and, altogether, it was as miserable a day as Washington had known that winter. Somehow the gray gloom of the day seemed to find itself penetrating the hearts of the two men as they sat in the disordered office. It was, perhaps, one of the darkest moments of the entire Civil War. For months the Union situation had been deteriorating, and the Administration was being criticized regularly. The Secretary of the Treasury was spending his last few dollars, and the immediate prospects of raising more were bleak. To add the final black touch, General McClellan, himself barely convalescent from typhoid fever, remained curiously reluctant to order the Army of the Potomac into action. The Quartermaster General realized that the President was a dangerously discouraged man. He realized, too, that if he made the wrong kind of reply, or if he indicated, by so much as the slight shading of a phrase, that he shared the fears of his Commander-in-Chief, the results would be catastrophic. In a few vigorous sentences he recommended that President Lincoln call an immediate conference of the high command and order the Army to advance at once. This advice had a galvanic effect upon the discouraged President, and the story of what happened during the two years which followed that black moment in the office of the Quartermaster General is well known to us all. Less well known, however, is the man whose words buoyed up the Commander-in-Chief at a time when the Union cause hung precariously in the balance. In all the colorful history of the Quartermaster Corps there never has been a Quartermaster General more colorful and dynamic than Montgomery Cunningham Meigs. He held the post for twenty-one years—a near record in itself—and when he retired, in , he reminded the Corps that "its worth and its success have been the study and the admiration of military nations. He inherited the blood of Revolutionary War officers from both sides of the family and, if there is anything to the theories of heredity, it was, perhaps, a foregone conclusion that he would quit the University of Pennsylvania and enter the United States Military Academy in . Four years later, when he graduated fifth in his class, he was recommended for a commission in any branch of the service. All told, his military service covered a span of forty-nine years and seven months, and when he died, in January , the War Department published an extraordinary General Order stating that "the Army has rarely possessed an officer who combined within himself so many valuable attainments and who was entrusted by the Government with a greater variety of weighty responsibilities, or who has proved himself more worthy of confidence. Some day historians may accomplish the necessary research and publish the life story of the man who, no less than Grant and Sherman, deserves a place among the truly great American soldiers. There are, however, certain highlights in his career, and certain pulgent excerpts from his official writings, which should be known to all officers of the Quartermaster Corps, because they epitomize the highest traditions of the Corps itself. When the War Department said that Meigs was a man "of strict probity and sense of right" it was telling only part of the story. There was no place in that bald, official prose for either anecdote or illustration. There was no mention, for instance, of the time when Meigs, as a Captain of Engineers, defied a powerful lobby and the Secretary of War, and finally carried his case directly to the White House. Back in the eighteen fifties the Corps of Engineers, just as today, was engaged in an extensive program of civil works. Among these projects was the construction of an aqueduct for the city of Washington under the supervision of Captain Meigs. The technical problems of this project were enormous, but even greater were the problems created by a group of contractors who were anxious to cut in on the civil works program. This group had unsuccessfully sought legislation to prevent any Army officer from having anything to do with any construction other than strictly military on the theory that, with the Army out of the picture, it would be simple to take over. As soon as James Buchanan was inaugurated, and John B. Floyd was sworn in as Secretary of War, the thwarted lobbyists turned their pressure on the War Department. One of their objectives was to discredit the Engineers. The exact

position of Secretary Floyd is a trifle obscure but he does not appear to have been entirely unsympathetic to the cause of the lobbyists. Meigs in Philadelphia to ask him to use his influence on his son. Captain Meigs indignantly reported the whole matter to President Buchanan. Two weeks later Captain Meigs was relieved as officer-in-charge and reduced to the status of a mere disbursing officer. Instead, he displayed some of the dogged tenacity which later was to characterize his operations as Quartermaster General. Abraham Lincoln was elected, South Carolina adopted the Ordinance of Secession, Secretary Floyd resigned to join the Confederacy, Fort Sumter was fired upon, and war suddenly became imminent. Almost immediately after Floyd resigned, Meigs was restored to his old assignment on the aqueduct project and, two months later, when the siege of Fort Sumter underlined the grave danger to all federal fortifications in the South, Captain Meigs found himself involved in an extraordinary plan to relieve the garrison of Fort Pickens, at Pensacola. Extraordinary is scarcely an adequate word to describe this operation. Just how extraordinary it was can be appreciated when it is noted that the principal-if not the only-planners were President Lincoln, Captain Meigs, Secretary of State Seward, and a Naval lieutenant, and that neither the Secretaries of War or Navy knew anything about it! Captain Meigs it seems, was destined to operate outside of the regular channels. Nevertheless, this unorthodox project paid off. Meigs became a full colonel on May 14, , and twenty-four hours later-was nominated as Quartermaster General of the Army, with the rank of Brevet Brigadier General. After all, Meigs was a year-old captain with no immediate prospects of going much higher before retirement. Certainly this must have colored his thoughts when on April 7 he wrote to Seward that you will find the Army and Navy clogged at the head with men, excellent patriotic men, men who were soldiers and sailors forty years ago, but who now merely keep active men out of the places in which they could serve the country. The general born, not made, is yet to be found who is to govern the great army which is to save the country, if saved it can be. In this exacting and difficult assignment, Meigs was denied the opportunity of directing troops in tactical operations, but his contribution to the ultimate Union victory was tremendous. Logistical support, always a vital ingredient of successful campaigns, never was more important than it was during the four years of war that followed, and without it Grant and Sherman would have been impotent. Meigs himself succinctly expressed this thought in his annual report to the Secretary of War in The least neglect or want of capacity on his part may foil the best concerted measures and make the best planned campaign impracticable. In connection with the latter, the Corps constructed and equipped a fleet of river "iron-clads" which it eventually turned over to the Navy. When one considers the rather rudimentary road and rail networks of the eighteen-sixties, it is nothing short of miraculous that General Meigs achieved what he did. Meigs, was killed at Harrisonburg, Virginia, in October , less than two years after his graduation from West Point. But, even without that added incentive, General Meigs never would have been content to be a desk soldier. Although he was forced to spend much of the war in Washington directing the far-flung operations of the Corps, his active spirit sent him into the field time and again. During the absences of the Quartermaster General, his Office continued to function efficiently under the direction of a group of senior officers who had been developed by Meigs. The love and loyalty which these men gave their chief was little short of idolatry. They knew that the Quartermaster General was behind them all the way, and not a few of them were indebted to him for the stars or eagles which they wore. Time after time, General Meigs reminded the Secretary of War that Quartermaster officers were being passed over in favor of the promotion of other officers holding more spectacular assignments in tactical units. Outstanding though his accomplishments were, the Quartermaster General grappled with many tough problems throughout the war years. Not the least of these was waste and poor supply discipline. Knapsacks are piled, blankets, overcoats and outer clothing are thrown off, and whether victorious or defeated, the regiments seem seldom to recover the property thus laid aside. Nevertheless, General Meigs tried to be philosophical about it all and, at the same time, to placate Congress, which had to appropriate increasingly large sums of money. On several occasions during the war General Meigs found it necessary to remind the Secretary of War that, although overcoats and blankets were supposed last much longer than other articles of clothing, the destruction, loss, and waste of these articles has been extraordinary, and the department has found it difficult to keep up the supply, which has been beyond all allowances fixed by regulations from the experience of the Regular Army in time of peace. General Meigs freely admitted the

inferiority of some of the uniforms procured at the outset of the war but he argued that, despite these makeshift issues, "the troops were clothed and rescued from severe suffering, and those who saw sentinels walking post about the capital of the United States in freezing weather in their drawers, without trousers or overcoats, will not blame the Department for its efforts to clothe them, even in materials not quite so durable as Army blue kersey. Recruitment of civilian personnel seemed always to lag behind demand. Soon after he took over his duties as Quartermaster General, Meigs remarked that an army of , men was being supplied by the office "which has scarcely adequate in its force and accommodations to the supply of the old army of less than 20, General Meigs summed it all up in his farewell message to the Corps when he stepped down in It has been expanded till, leavened by the knowledge and spirit and integrity of the small body of officers who composed it early in , it showed itself competent to take care of the supplies and transportation of a great army during four years of most active warfare. It moved vast bodies of soldiers over long routes; it collected a fleet of over 1, sail of transport vessels upon the great rivers and upon the coast; it constructed and equipped a squadron of river iron-clads which bore an important part in the operations in the West, and after having proved its practical power and usefulness, was accepted by the Navy to which such vessels properly belonged; it supplied the army while organizing, and while actively campaigning over long routes of communication by wagon, by rail, by river, and by sea, exposed to hostile attacks and frequently broken up by the enemy; and, having brought to the camps a great army, it, at the close of hostilities, returned to their homes a million and a quarter of men. During the decade after he left active service he returned occasionally to his first love engineering. He supervised the development of plans for the National Museum and Pension Office buildings in Washington, and it must have been particularly gratifying to him that when Congress authorized the construction of the latter building, it specifically directed that General Meigs be in charge. He could not have helped but recall, at that time, his stormy tour of duty with the aqueduct project back in , and this extraordinary action of Congress must have seemed like a final vindication. However, no vindication was needed. General Meigs had proved himself worthy of the utmost confidence and trust time and time again. Perhaps the greatest-if unintentional complement ever paid to General Meigs came from the blunt and impatient General Sherman, who put this unorthodox endorsement upon an illegible handwritten report which he had received from the Quartermaster General; during the war:

Chapter 5 : Brigadier General Montgomery C. Meigs - Quartermaster General

CI VIL WAR HISTO R Y Kenneth P. Williams, in Lincoln Finds a General says that "Better quarter-master generals than M. C. Meigs do not often come along."

Army during and after the American Civil War. Meigs strongly opposed secession and supported the Union; his record as Quartermaster General was regarded as outstanding, both in effectiveness and in ethical probity, and Secretary of State William H. Seward viewed it as a key factor in the Union victory. Meigs was one of the principal architects of Arlington National Cemetery ; the choice of its location, on Robert E. Early life and engineering projects Meigs was born in Augusta, Georgia , in May He was the son of Dr. He enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania in , the same year he began to practice medicine in Georgia. Charles Meigs received his MD from the University of Pennsylvania in , and that summer he moved his familyâ€”which now included one-year-old Montgomeryâ€”to Philadelphia and established a practice there. Montgomery Meigs, caught up in the nationalistic fervor of the time, wished to serve in the army. He was among the top three students in French and mathematics, and did well in history. Artillery, but most of his army service was with the Corps of Engineers, in which he worked on important engineering projects. He also served under the command of then- Lt. Lee to make navigational improvements on the Mississippi River. His favorite prewar engineering project was the Washington Aqueduct , which he supervised from to It involved the construction of the monumental Union Arch Bridge across Cabin John Creek , designed by Alfred Rives, which for 50 years remained the longest single-span masonry arch in the world. Meigs in March In the fall of , as a result of a disagreement over procurement contracts, Meigs incurred the ill will of the Secretary of War , John B. Floyd , and was banished to Tortugas in the Gulf of Mexico to construct fortifications at that place and at Key West. This included Fort Jefferson, Florida. Upon the resignation of Floyd a few months later, Meigs was recalled to his work on the aqueduct at Washington. Seward with drawing up a plan for the relief of Fort Pickens , Florida, by means of a secret expedition. In April , together with Lieutenant David D. Porter of the Navy, they carried out the expedition, embarking under orders from the President without the knowledge of either the Secretary of the Navy or the Secretary of War. On May 14, , Meigs was appointed colonel , 11th U. Infantry, and on the following day, promoted to brigadier general and Quartermaster General of the Army. Meigs established a reputation for being efficient, hard-driving, and scrupulously honest. He molded a large and somewhat diffuse department into a great tool of war. He was one of the first to fully appreciate the importance of logistical preparations in military planning, and under his leadership, supplies moved forward and troops were transported over long distances with ever-greater efficiency. Meigs, one of the ablest graduates of the Military Academy, was kept from the command of troops by the inestimably important services he performed as Quartermaster General. Perhaps in the military history of the world there never was so large an amount of money disbursed upon the order of a single man The aggregate sum could not have been less during the war than fifteen hundred million dollars, accurately vouched and accounted for to the last cent. Secretary of State William H. He was brevetted to major general on July 5, A staunch Unionist, Meigs detested the Confederacy. His feelings led directly to the establishment of Arlington National Cemetery. On July 16, , Congress passed legislation authorizing the U. Army Quartermaster General in charge of this program. Meigs ordered that an examination of eligible sites be made for the establishment for a large new national military cemetery. Within weeks, his staff reported that Arlington Estate was the most suitable property in the area. It was also the home of Robert E. Lee, future General-in-Chief of the Confederacy, and denying Lee use of his home after the war was a valuable political consideration. The Union supply system, even as it penetrated deeper into the South, maintained its efficiency. Historians credit the achievements to Meigs. They operated out of sixteen major depots, which formed the basis of the system of procurement and supply throughout the war. As the war expanded, operation of these depots became much more complex, with an overlapping and interweaving relationship between the army and government operated factories, private factories, and numerous middlemen. The purchase of goods and services through contracts supervised by the quartermasters accounted for most of federal military expenditures, apart from the wages of the soldiers. The

quartermasters supervised their own soldiers, and cooperated closely with state officials, manufacturers and wholesalers trying to sell directly to the army; and representatives of civilian workers looking for higher pay at government factories. The complex system was closely monitored by congressmen anxious to ensure that their districts won their share of contracts. The system grew in efficiency to the point Union troops on long marches would simply throw away excess knapsacks, bedrolls, overcoats, and other pieces of clothing and equipment that they felt were weighing them down, fully confident that they would be resupplied at some point in the near future. Meigs was part of a three-man patrol which ran into a three-man Confederate patrol. Meigs was killed, one man was captured, and one man escaped. To the end of his life, Meigs believed that his son had been murdered after being captured—despite evidence to the contrary. Stanton attended the interment. Meigs stood at the front door of the house for the rest of the deathwatch. He alone decided who was admitted to the house. When Lincoln died at 7: Meigs played a critical role in developing Arlington National Cemetery, both during the Civil War and afterward. By May 31, more than 2, burials had occurred in the cemetery, and Meigs ordered that a white picket fence be constructed around the burial grounds. Although Meigs had not intended to collect the remains of Confederate war dead, the inability to identify remains meant that both Union and Confederate dead were interred below the cenotaph. The Civil War Unknowns Monument consists of two long, light grey granite slabs, with the shorter ends formed by sandwiching a smaller slab between the longer two. On the west face was an inscription describing the number of dead in the vault below, and honoring the "unknowns of the Civil War". A walk led east to the flower garden, and another west to the road. Sod was laid around the memorial, and planting beds filled with annual plants emplaced. Meigs made additional major changes to the cemetery in the s. In , he ordered that a "Sylvan Hall"—a series of three cruciform tree plantings, one inside the other—be planted in the "Field of the Dead" in what is now Section Patent Office building had suffered a massive fire in It was torn down and rebuilt in , but the work went very slowly. Meigs ordered that stone columns, pediments , and entablatures which had been saved from the Patent Office be used to construct the Temple of Fame. The Temple was a round, Greek Revival , temple-like structure with Doric columns supporting a central dome. Inscribed on the pediment supporting the dome were the names of great Americans such as George Washington , Ulysses S. Grant, Abraham Lincoln, and David Farragut. A year after it was built, the names of Union Civil War generals were carved into its columns. The Temple of Fame was demolished in Meigs became a permanent resident of the District of Columbia after the war. As Quartermaster General after the Civil War, Meigs supervised plans for the new War Department building constructed between and , the National Museum constructed in , the extension of the Washington Aqueduct constructed in , and for a hall of records constructed in From to , he made another visit to study the organization of European armies, this time with nephew and Army officer Montgomery M. Macomb assigned as aide-de-camp. He was a regent of the Smithsonian Institution , a member of the American Philosophical Society , and one of the earliest members of the National Academy of Sciences. Pension Building to Following the end of the Civil War, the US Congress passed legislation that greatly extended the scope of pension coverage for both veterans and their survivors and dependents, notably their widows and orphans. This greatly increased the number of staff needed to administer the new benefits system. More than 1, clerks were required, and a new building was needed to house them. Meigs was chosen to design and construct the new building, now the National Building Museum. He broke away from the established Greco-Roman models that had been the basis of government buildings in Washington, D. The white tomb of Montgomery C. To the left is the sarcophagus Meigs designed for his son, John shown in bas relief. To the right is a marker above the graves of his father and grandfather, who were reinterred next to him. Because of the way the 28 sections are modified and mixed up, only somewhat careful examination reveals the frieze to be the same figures repeated over and over. The sculpture includes infantry, navy, artillery, cavalry, and medical components, as well as a good deal of the supply and quartermaster functions. When Philip Sheridan was asked to comment on the building, his reply echoed the sentiment of many of the Washington establishment of the day, that the only thing that he could find wrong with the building was that it was fireproof. A similar quote is also attributed to William T. Sherman , so the story might well be apocryphal. Death Meigs contracted a cold on December 27, Within a few days, it turned into pneumonia. Meigs died at home at 5: General orders issued at the time of his

death declared, "the Army has rarely possessed an officer In , the Georgia Historical Society erected a historical marker at the birthplace of Gen. Meigs in Augusta, Georgia.

Chapter 6 : General Montgomery Cunningham Meigs

You have been assigned with rank of Colonel as Chief Quartermaster of the Depot of New York. Relieving that the Depot which supplies clothing and equipage is large enough to afford full occupation and employment to you.

Walter is credited as the architect of the Capitol Dome, his world-renowned design could not have been accomplished without Montgomery C. Army during and after the American Civil War. During his career he had a role in building a number of well-known D. He received a commission as a second lieutenant in the 1st U. Artillery, but most of his army service was with the Corps of Engineers, in which he worked on important engineering projects. In one of his early career assignments, Meigs served under the command of then-Lt. Lee to make navigational improvements on the Mississippi River. In , the War Department assumed control of the the Capitol extension project. He took the reins of the project energetically, immersing himself in the study of architecture, acoustics, heating, ventilation, and decorating. Walter, the construction, funding and logistical challenges were Meigs responsibility. One significant engineering feat he accomplished was how to raise the cast iron to build the dome. A steam engine housed in a shack on the roof provided power to capable of lifting 20, pounds of material. To fuel the steam engine he first used the wood from the old smaller dome that was removed. Meigs also had a significant influence and role in a number of the fine arts and decorative design elements of the Capitol. In addition he purchased the Minton tiles found on the Senate side of the Capitol and hired Constantino Brumidi , an Italian artist who had immigrated to America, to design the iconic Senate Corridors that bear his name and adorn the Rotunda with the Apotheosis of Washington. After six and half years as supervising engineer of the Capitol, Meigs left indelible marks upon the extension and the new Capitol dome. He believed the Capitol was more legacy than a job, and he worked tirelessly to make it as sturdy and beautiful as possible. Later Career Following his work at the Capitol, at the start of the Civil War, President Lincoln appointed Meigs quartermaster general, a crucial post that was perfectly suited to his organizational and management talents. He also oversaw much of the design and monument construction at Arlington National Cemetery built upon the grounds of the home of his former commander Robert E. Following his death in he was buried there with military honors, his tomb rests there today.

Chapter 7 : Meigs Family - Photographic History

m.c. meigs, Quartermaster, Brevet Major-General. A version of this archives appears in print on May 3, , on Page 4 of the New York edition with the headline: Important Orders by Quartermaster.

Meigs; killed at age 22 while serving as Topographic Engineer on Gen. Partly printed document signed "Abraham Lincoln" , countersigned by Edwin M. Partly printed document signed, countersigned by Stanton, Washington D. Partly printed document signed, Washington D. Certificate conferring 1st Lieutenant rank, Washington, D. Appointment as Cadet to the U. Hunt, inscribed at top, "Cadet Meigs U. Certificate of Baptism, Washington, D. New Market, Woodstock, Shenandoah Valley, x mm. All finely detailed, executed in graphite with blue and red pencil on buff paper. Albumen print of Meigs in an interior [], 68 x 59 mm. Meigs, killed by Guerillas near Harrisonberg W. For 5 miles in all directions Gen. Sheridan laid waste the country in retribution of this deed" -- Engraving of Abraham Lincoln, bust length, with printed facsimile of signature below. Autograph letter signed to J. Letter signed to E. Autograph letter signed to M. Letter signed, Washington D. Autograph letter signed to his son, Washington, 18 December , 1 page, 4to, sent with the preceding letter, "I enclose a letter from the Secreatry of War, complimenting you for your conduct in the unfortunate battle of Bull Run Ranging from quick studies of routes to more finished maps that include routes, rivers, and topographical features, the maps record precisely the part of the battlefield in which Meigs died. Custer to burn all of the houses within five miles of Harrisonburg in retaliation, later remanded. When the Lieutenant and his two orderlies came alongside these men wheeled suddenly, grasped the bridles and commenced firing at the Lieutenant and his men. He was universally esteemed and was considered by all to have been for his age one of the best officers in the service of the United States".

Chapter 8 : Montgomery C. Meigs | Revolv

The third modern biography of Meigs, O'Harrow's follows in the wake of Russell F. Weigley's "Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M. C. Meigs" (), long the.

Additional Information In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: A Biography of M. Meigs, has at last appeared. Williams is a notable exceptionâ€”have more than mentioned him. Quartermaster generals, like the work of the Quartermaster Corps, are usually mentioned in histories of war only when they fail to function well. Another figure in a key position at the time who has been even more neglected than Meigs was Joseph B. Taylor, Commissary General for Subsistence from to His administrative ability, self-reliance, and complete honesty recommended him to Lincoln and Seward for the post of Quartermaster General, but it is certain that Secretary of War Cameron would have preferred a more compliant candidate. One can only speculate on the results of such an appointment. Meigs do not often come along. He moved with speed and energy to expand and organize the affairs of the Department. Procurement methods were often very lax; huge profits and even outright graft were common. Weigley covers in detail the fantastic situation under General Fremont in St. Louis which Meigs found when he took command. Large contracts were being let to favored dealers at very high prices. These men then bought supplies. Almost anything they offered was accepted, whether it met requirements or not. Profits of 40 per cent were not uncommon. Meigs took vigorous steps to correct the situation before a Congressional investigation made the scandal public. He insisted on public announcement of requirements except in the most extreme emergencies, and was liberal with reprimands for paying too high prices. At the same time he was very careful never to deny Army commanders the right to purchase any supplies they needed. Acceptance of inferior supplies was also common when Meigs took over, and he improved this situation by insisting on adequate inspection by trained personnel. It was typical of his ingenuity that, when he learned of the large number of unserviceable animals being accepted because there were not enough experienced men to inspect them, he urged the use of disabled cavalry and artillery officers as inspectors. Early in the war shortage of suitable cloth for uniforms was critical and soldiers were often in rags. Though there were violent complaints from the mills in New England that he was ruining native industry, Meigs had suitable cloth purchased in Europe until the You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

Chapter 9 : General M. C. Meigs (AP)

Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs Credit Library of Congress It's impossible to overstate the logistical challenges facing the Union Army at the start of the Civil War. The expansion of the Army from around 16,000 men in 1861 to half a million just two years later created a nightmare of supply, which was both nonexistent and.

He molded a large and somewhat diffuse department into a great tool of war. He was one of the first to fully appreciate the importance of logistical preparations in modern military planning. Under his capable leadership supplies moved forward and troops were transported over long distances with ever greater efficiency. Meigs, soldier, engineer, was born in Augusta, GA. During his childhood the family moved from Georgia to Philadelphia, where he entered the University of Pennsylvania in 1825. He left that university in 1829 to enter the United States Military Academy, graduating fifth in his class in 1831. After temporary assignment to the Artillery, he was transferred to the Engineer Corps spending a quarter of a century, devoting his conspicuous ability to many important engineering projects. Of these, his favorite was the Washington Aqueduct. This work, of which he was in charge from 1846 to 1852, also involved the design of the monumental bridge across Cabin John Branch which for some fifty years remained unsurpassed as the longest masonry arch in the world. From 1831 to 1835 he also supervised of the building of the wings and dome of the national Capitol, and from 1835 to 1840, the extension of the General Post Office Building, as well as the direction of many minor works of construction. In the fall of 1845, after the death of General Floyd, and was "banished to Tortugas in the Gulf of Mexico to construct fortifications at that place and at Key West". Upon the resignation of Floyd a few months later, he was recalled to his work on the aqueduct at Washington. In April, 1846, together with Lieutenant. Porter of the Navy, they carried out the expedition, embarking under orders from the President without the knowledge of either the Secretary of the Navy or the Secretary of War. On May 14, 1846, Meigs was appointed colonel, 11th Infantry, and on the following day, promoted to brigadier general and Quartermaster General of the Army. Of his work in this office James G. Blaine remarked, "Montgomery C. Meigs, one of the ablest graduates of the Military Academy, was kept from the command of troops by the inestimably important services he performed as Quartermaster General. Perhaps in in the military history of the world there never was so large an amount of money disbursed upon the order of a single man The aggregate sum could not have been less during the war than fifteen hundred million dollars, accurately vouched and accounted for to the last cent. He was brevetted major general July 5, 1862. Lee, he used as a military burial ground. Based on this recommendation, Arlington National Cemetery was created in 1862. He is buried at Arlington Cemetery. As Quartermaster General after the Civil War, Meigs supervised plans for the new War Department building, the National Museum, the extension of the Washington Aqueduct and for a hall of records. In 1863, to recuperate from the strain of his war service, he visited Europe, and in 1864 made another visit to study the government of European armies. After his retirement on February 6, 1865, he became architect of the Pension Office Building. He was a regent of the Smithsonian Institution, a member of the American Philosophical Society, and one of the earliest members of the National Academy of Sciences. Meigs died in Washington on January 2, 1870, after a short illness and his body was interred with high military honors in Arlington National Cemetery. The General Orders Jan.