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Reminiscences of the Burning of Columbia, South Carolina

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The following letters and official reports will show something of the bitterness of the dispute over the burning of Columbia:

"And without hesitation I charged General Wade Hampton with having burned his own city of Columbia, not with a malicious intent, or as the manifestation of a silly 'Roman stoicism,' but from folly and want of sense, in filling it with lint, cotton and tinder."—Report of MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM T. SHERMAN, dated Goldsborough, N. C., April 4, 1865.

"In my official report of this conflagration, I distinctly charged it to General Wade Hampton, and confess I did so pointedly, to shake the faith of his people in him, for in my opinion he was a braggart, and professed to be the special champion of South Carolina."—GEN. WILLIAM T. SHERMAN, in his *Memoirs*.

"He (Sherman) shall be dealt with in the manner that all defamers deserve, and my language shall be so plain and the proofs so overwhelming that even he himself can understand, obtuse though he may be to the obligations due to or from a gentleman."—LIEUTENANT GENERAL WADE HAMPTON, in Letter of June 24, 1873, with Appendix.

"I have proved that every assertion made by Sherman in his official report, so far as they have been quoted here are false, and I shall now prove, not only that his troops burned the city, but that the destruction of it was premeditated."—LIEUTENANT GENERAL WADE HAMPTON, in Letter of June 24, 1873, with Appendix.

The burning of Columbia, South Carolina, February 17, 1865, was one of the most deplorable events of the Civil War and one that has left a deep and ineradicable scar. The event was so dreadful as

in itself to demand attention, and interest in the disaster is further increased by the picturesque and choleric personalities of the two principals concerned in it.

Gen. William T. Sherman was the commander of the invading army, and Gen. Wade Hampton in immediate command of the Confederates who resisted Sherman's entry into Columbia.

No two men better typified their causes, their people and civilizations than these. Each was a gentleman of the noblest character, each a thorough soldier and distinguished citizen. Each is now held in the highest esteem in his own section, but is not so well regarded in the other parts of the country. Sherman and Hampton accuse each other of the destruction of Columbia.

To read the statement of either alone is to be convinced by its force and fierceness. To read both impels one to pause and consider. To read all the other data obtainable, finally, is to reach a conclusion, doubtless correct, and honorable to each of the exceedingly militant generals, whose splendid characters, heroic careers, and lovable personalities will eventually win and hold the admiration of the American people of all sections for all time to come.

The fact is the two men were much alike down to their cock fighting proclivities, and this explains much of their vehemence in speech in relation to each other.

The writer believes that both Sherman and Hampton were thoroughly sincere in what they uttered; that they had considerable foundation for their convictions, but that both failed to grasp the truth on the other's side, and were in consequence, more or less in error.

The writer, when a boy of fourteen, accompanied his father, Col. Michael C. Garber, Chief Quartermaster in the Field of the Army of the Mississippi (Sherman's army) during the March through the Carolinas. He is probably one of the few now surviving who were close to General Sherman and an eye witness of the capture and destruction of Columbia.

On the morning of February 17, 1865, we were in bivouac at Congaree Creek, where the fight had occurred the afternoon before. It was the morning of the most eventful day of the great March through the Carolinas. After breakfast we mounted our horses and rode into Camp Sorghum, which was very near our camp. It was a prison for Union officers. Second growth small timber covered the ground sparsely. Huts of the rudest description had been

constructed of the forest trees by our men and daubed with mud. They were simply roofs to keep off the rain. No floors, windows or doors. Like a tent fly they were open in front. The prisoners had been removed the day before but a few had burrowed in the earth and been covered with dirt by their comrades, and thus remained until the sound of Yankee voices served as Gabriel's horn to resurrect them.

Seventeen hundred officers had been confined here and in Columbia immediately before our arrival. General Sherman's staff was scattered that morning and did not ride out together with the cavalry escort. Moving alone along the State road, which, with the river front opposite Columbia, was held by our troops, I saw the beautiful city, so full of interest to the triumphant and magnificent army of 62,000 men—the army of which Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, C. S. A., wrote:

“I made up my mind that there had been no such army since the days of Julius Caesar.”

The piers of the big bridge over the Congaree river were standing but no trace was left of the wood work, which was burned the day before. Upon the level plain leading to the bridge a large number of Union soldiers were standing, looking at the city, and the occasional Confederate soldiers to be seen crossing the streets at right angles with the river. Amongst our soldiers I soon perceived Uncle Billie on foot, walking amongst the boys. I overheard him talking familiarly to them. He asked about their socks and shoes; if their feet were in good condition; if they had plenty to eat and were well.

As was generally the case the General had an unlighted cigar in his mouth. One soldier remarked: “That's the same cigar he had at Atlanta.” Another, observing me, trailing after the General, jerked out, with a significant nod: “There's too d——d much *infantry* in this army.”

Turning away from the laughs that greeted this sally of wit at my expense, I rode my horse to the river to let him drink. He had no sooner buried his nose in the Congaree than Captain De Gres's battery upon the bank above discharged a twenty-pound Parrott gun and the animal leaped in the air. Fortunately I was able to hold my seat but I couldn't persuade the horse to drink after that.

Occasional shells were directed at the trains running supplies needed by our army out of Columbia right under our eyes. While

no shots were fired from Columbia at Sherman's army at this point, the Confederate batteries shelled our camps and wagon trains on the night of the 16th—thereby making legitimate our return fire. It was not indiscriminate, however, being confined to the railroad trains. No person was killed or wounded by it.

I next rode along the river bank several miles to a cotton mill, in front of which a pontoon bridge was being laid. Here I found the Generals Sherman and Howard and staffs.

General Sherman stood amongst his officers, and as we saw the Mayor of Columbia come out in a carriage and surrender the city to our skirmish line, said:

"It is no small thing to march into the heart of the enemy's country and take his capital."

This was uttered without boastfulness but with deep and evident satisfaction.

Generals Sherman and Howard, accompanied by their respective staffs and escorts, immediately crossed the two smaller rivers, the Saluda and Broad, which united form the Congaree river, and after a short ride entered Columbia.

In the center of the principal business street bales of cotton had been placed by the Confederates. When we passed them they were open and fire was burning deep down in their depths. One old fashioned fire engine in which the water was pumped by hand power and forced through the hose, was visible, which apparently had been operated by soldiers and negroes, who ceased their labor while the procession passed by.

A high wind was blowing and the cotton was torn loose and scattered amongst the branches of trees, where it hung in festoons and occasioned general comment as looking like big flakes in a snow storm.

The street was full of soldiers. Amongst them were many escaped Union prisoners, whose ragged clothes exposed the bare skin in places, and rags and skin and the men all over were one hue—a dirty dust color. I had never seen any human beings look so before, and I have never since, for that matter. These men had not washed, it was evident, during their confinement. They had hidden in the prison shacks or burrowed in the earth and been covered by comrades with dirt, when the exodus began to escape our army. Some of our men, thus attempting to regain their liberty, perished when the guards burned the prisons.

These survivors were frantic with joy over their escape and shouted plaudits to Sherman. "Greater than Napoleon," I recollect one fellow kept saying, "Greater than Caesar or Hannibal."

The negroes, too, were rapturous. Major George Ward Nichols, in his "Story of the Great March," records one ejaculating: "Tank de Almighty God, Mister Sherman has come at last. We knew it; we prayed for de day, and de Lord Jesus heerd our prayers. Mr. Sherman has come wid his company."

One fat old mammy embarrassed me very much but afforded amusement to the staff officers by exclaiming: "Bress Gawd, see the purty little Yankee."

I do not recollect seeing any of the white citizens of Columbia during Sherman's triumphal entry, although some of the colored people were so white I could not tell to which race they belonged.

Colonel Garber, as Chief Quartermaster, had orders from the general commanding to hunt up and secure valuable machinery, stores and supplies, and take charge of all captured property. He immediately entered upon that duty and I being left foot-loose walked back to look at the new state house and see what was going on.

This time I did see white citizens, for some stood at their front doors and offered liquor of various kinds to passers-by. I took none, but the soldiers did, and also broke into saloons and liquor houses to get it. There was wholesale looting of the stores going on. I entered but one, a hardware store, thinking I could get a pocket knife, but they were all gone. This store was being robbed by low whites and negroes of Columbia. They quarreled and as there were no soldiers in there at the time I was afraid and left.

I saw drunken Union soldiers lying asleep in stores, overcome with liquors, and I have no doubt a number of them were burned to death in the great conflagration of the night.

Major S. H. M. Byers, one of the Federal officers imprisoned in Columbia, and who concealed himself and escaped, in his army reminiscences, records a report "that an explosion occurred in one house and that twenty-four soldiers, carousing there, were lost in the ruins."

My first recollection of the fire was of being awakened by my father and getting out of my comfortable bed reluctantly. The entire city seemed to be burning and the flames appeared to reach to the zenith. General Sherman and his entire staff, including my

father, were up and at work the rest of the night, protecting the citizens and giving them assistance. Wood's division had first occupied the town and Hazen's was ordered in. Troops traversed all the streets, company front, reaching from wall to wall or fence to fence, and arrested every soldier not in a regular command under an officer. Many soldiers were drunk, some were violent and a few criminal. Major Dayton, of General Sherman's Staff, and later of Cincinnati, shot one of our soldiers for attempting to assault a woman. Two men were killed, thirty wounded and 370 arrested during the cleaning-up. Very few crimes were committed against women.

Colonel Garber in his diary of the March says:

"The fire was terrible, the scenes too horrible to describe. Large quantities of whisky were found, which the men drank to an alarming extent. My estimate is that forty blocks were burned. So much for giving soldiers liquor.

"The large and valuable stores which I had secured were destroyed, to the great loss and detriment of the government."

The sack of the stores and the burning of the best portion of the city of Columbia is not to the credit of the Federal arms. Doubtless most of those who justified it at the time, when the passions of civil strife were raging, would condemn it now were they alive.

I have in my possession, through the courtesy of General Wade Hampton, a copy of his "Letter of June 24, 1873, with Appendix," and the "Report of Committee of Citizens of Columbia, May, 1866," upon the subject.

The pamphlet is a terrible indictment of General Sherman and his army. If read alone, or by those not witnesses of the occurrences, it would appear convincing—irrefutable.

But this pamphlet, and similar charges wherever and by whomsoever made, are not true and just. General Sherman did not intend to destroy Columbia. Had he felt it was a military necessity he would have burned the city in broad daylight, as he did Atlanta, and acknowledged it. The General's orders for the government of the troops while occupying Columbia, dated February 16, 1865, were in these words; page 277, General Order No. 26:

"General Howard will cross the Saluda and Broad rivers as near their mouths as possible, occupy Columbia, destroying the public buildings, railroad property, manufacturing and machine shops; but will spare libraries,

asylums and private dwellings. He will then move to Winnsboro, destroying, en route, utterly that section of the railroad. He will also cause all bridges, trestles, water tanks and depots on the railroad back to the Wateree to be burned, switches broken, and such other destruction as he can find time to accomplish consistent with proper celerity."

If any Federal officer is responsible for the loot and burning of Columbia, then, it is Gen. O. O. Howard, who was in immediate command, and whose orders forbade such destruction.

General Howard, above all the Federal generals, was distinguished for humanitarian impulses and religious convictions. It is impossible to believe he burned Columbia or connived at it. How then was Columbia burned? As a result of several unfortunate, coincident conditions, with an attendant division of responsibility. The high wind, the street full of cotton and its ignition, the absence of any fire department worthy of the name, the predominance of framed houses, the failure of the Confederate and also the Federal authorities to seize intoxicants, the hatred of South Carolina by all the Union soldiers as the author of secession, and last, but not least, the thirst of the escaped Union prisoners and local convicts for revenge.

Could you have seen those Union prisoners and heard their stories of needless cruelty and humiliation you could comprehend their frenzy, to avenge themselves and their comrades.

Columbia was the victim of the mistakes of the Confederates, the insufficient precautions of Mayor Goodwin and Generals Hampton and Howard, the rage and passion for plunder of soldiers of both armies, convicts, the lowest of the populace, and the vengeance of the Union soldiers. It was a deplorable and frightful crime but General William T. Sherman is not guilty as charged.

Col. G. A. Stone's brigade, which first occupied the city, was composed of Iowa regiments.

The Fifteenth Corps, commanded by Gen. John A. Logan, to which this brigade belonged, were as fine troops as ever lived. The Fifteenth and Seventeenth corps constituted the Army of the Tennessee, of which General Grant said:

"As an army it never sustained a single defeat during four years of war; every fortification which it assailed surrendered; every force arrayed against it was either defeated, captured or destroyed. No officer was ever assigned to the command of that army who had afterward to be relieved from duty or reduced to a lesser command. Such a history is not by accident."

Another writer has said:

"It numbers among its distinguished dead, Grant, Sherman, McPherson, Logan, McCook, Blair, Pope, Gresham, Hazen, and a host of others, whose names during the war were as familiar as household words.

"Marching over six thousand miles, it hewed its way through the very heart of the Confederacy, unfurled its victorious banners in the capitals of six Confederate states; and finally waved them in triumph over the birthplace of secession.

"It was the only Northern army whose commander was killed in battle, and the only one that never sustained a defeat."

It is inconceivable that a body of men with such a record should be deficient in morale and discipline. The army as a mass was not guilty. The crimes were committed by individuals, and compared to the thousands with whom they were mingled, but few in number.

During General Sherman's stay in Columbia he was constantly engaged in errands of courtesy and labors of mercy. He vacated the headquarters (the Blanton Duncan House) of his staff to admit women refugees from the disaster.

After the fire the local mills were occupied by the Union troops and flour and corn meal ground for the destitute citizens. When the army left the city these mills were spared and turned over, with quantities of grain, and 500 beeves to the municipal authorities; also 100 muskets and ammunition for their protection.

That General Sherman was opposed to plundering and burning private residences is evident from Special Field Orders number 119 and 120, dated respectively November 8 and 9, 1864. Foraging is restricted to parties under commissioned officers. "Soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants, or commit any trespass," etc. "To corps commanders alone is intrusted the power to destroy mills, houses, cotton-gins," etc.

A few days out from Atlanta on the March to the Sea, General Sherman interpreted these orders, as he narrates in his *Memoirs*, as follows:

"It was at this very plantation that a soldier passed me with a ham on his musket, a jug of sorghum molasses under his arm, and a big piece of honey in his hand, from which he was eating, and, catching my eye, he remarked sotto voice and carelessly to a comrade, 'Forage liberally on the country,' quoting from my general orders. On this occasion, as on many others that fell under my personal observation, I reproved the man, explained that foraging must be limited to the regular parties properly detailed, and that all provisions thus obtained must be delivered to the

regular commissaries, to be fairly distributed to the men who kept their ranks."

General Sherman always held General Hampton and the civil authorities of Columbia responsible for the city's destruction. He censured General Hampton for ordering the cotton taken out of the warehouses and piled in the street. Why was this done if it was not preparatory to burning it?

General Hampton, in the pamphlet mentioned, "Burning of Columbia," admits that the cotton was by him, under direction from General Beauregard, ordered placed in vacant fields or lots to be burned, and that transportation being insufficient, it was placed in the street by the Confederate post commander, Major Allen J. Green. Subsequently, under direction of General Beauregard, Gen. Hampton had Capt. Rawlin Lowndes, A. A. G. issue an order that no cotton be burned.

General Sherman attributed the burning of the city also to the failure of the civil and military authorities of the Confederacy to destroy the large supplies of liquor before his army entered it.

General Sherman utters something by way of explanation, if not apology, for the destructiveness of his army on page 254 of his *Memoirs*, as follows:

"Somehow, our men had gotten the idea that South Carolina was the cause of all our troubles; her people were the first to fire on Fort Sumter, had been in a great hurry to precipitate our country into civil war; and therefore on them should fall the scourge of the war in its worst form. Taunting messages had also come to us, when in Georgia, to the effect that, when we should reach South Carolina, we would find a people less passive, who would fight us to the bitter end, daring us to come over, etc.; so that I saw and felt that we would be unable longer to restrain our men as we had done in Georgia.

"Personally I had many friends in Charleston, to whom I would gladly have extended protection and mercy, but they were beyond my personal reach, and I would not restrain the army lest its vigor and energy should be impaired; and I had every reason to expect bold and strong resistance at the many broad and deep rivers that lay across our path."

The first United States troops to enter Columbia were Colonel Stone's brigade, first division, 15th army corps, composed of Iowa regiments. Colonel Stone is therefore the best witness available as to conditions in the city when surrendered, and what occurred during the domination of the lawless elements.

In his report dated February 19, 1865, Colonel Stone says :

"We had arrived within about a mile of the city, when a carriage displaying a flag of truce approached containing Mr. Goodwin, mayor of Columbia, and the city aldermen, who came to offer terms of capitulation. I refused anything but an unconditional surrender, which, after a few words, he consented to and unconditionally surrendered the city of Columbia. I joined the party in the carriage, accompanied by Major Anderson, of the Fourth Iowa, and Captain Pratt, of General Logan's staff, and left the brigade under the temporary charge of Lieutenant-Colonel Jenkins, Thirty-first Iowa, and preceded the column about half a mile. When near the suburbs of the city I noticed some of the advanced skirmishers, say about fifteen in number, being driven back by apparently a battalion of rebel cavalry. I at once called a corporal and three men, who happened to be near me, and put the major and aldermen in the corporal's charge, and with Major Anderson took about forty of my flankers and advanced on the cavalry. The corporal was instructed that in case one man was killed or wounded, he should at once shoot the mayor and his party. Joining the retreating skirmishers with the forty flankers we speedily dispersed the rebel cavalry, having no more trouble in gaining the city. I proceeded to the state house with Captain Pratt and planted the first U. S. flag on that building.

"I was absent from the brigade about an hour in placing the flag on the state house, and when I rejoined my command found a great number of the men drunk. It was discovered that this was caused by hundreds of negroes who swarmed the streets on the approach of the troops and gave them all kinds of liquors from buckets, bottles, demijohns, etc. The men had slept none the night before, and but little the night before that, and many of them had no supper the night before, and none of them breakfast that morning, hence the speedy effect of the liquor. I forthwith ordered all the liquor destroyed, and saw fifteen barrels destroyed within five minutes after the order had been given.

"Brevet Major-General Woods now sent me word to guard the private property of the citizens and take possession of all the public buildings. I did so immediately upon receipt of the order, distributing my five regiments throughout the city and appointing Lieutenant-Colonel Jenkins, Thirty-first Iowa, provost-marshal. A number of buildings were fired during the early part of the evening, but the fire was promptly put out before it had gained much headway. A great many drunken men were now showing themselves in the streets from, I should think, every regiment of our corps, the Seventeenth Corps, and some even from General Kilpatrick's cavalry. My command was so scattered throughout the city that I found it necessary to have a stronger guard, and therefore applied through my acting assistant adjutant-general to Brevet Major-General Woods twice, once in writing, for one or two more regiments for patrolling the city, but received no reinforcements. About eight o'clock the city was fired in a number of places by some of our escaped prisoners and citizens (I am satisfied I can prove this), and some of the fire having originated in basements stored

full of cotton, it was impossible to extinguish it. The fire engines were ordered out, but the flames could not be stopped; the buildings were old, nearly all wooden ones, and the wind blowing almost a gale. At 8 p. m. I received orders that I was to be relieved by Brevet Brigadier-General Woods and I sent the brigade to camp about one mile out of town, but remained in the city myself, working all night to assist in extinguishing the fire."

The troops which relieved Colonel Stone were the First Brigade, First Division, 15th Army Corps, commanded by Brevet Brigadier General William B. Woods. The Twelfth Indiana, Colonel Reuben Williams, was one of the regiments. The Second Brigade of the same division was also summoned. It was commanded by an Indiana man, Col. Robert F. Catterson. In this force were the 97th and 100th Indiana Infantry, under the commands of Lt. Col. Aden G. Cavins and Major Ruel M. Johnson respectively.

The Second Division of the same corps was also ordered into the city. In its Second Brigade was the 83rd Indiana commanded by Captain Charles W. White. In the Third Brigade was the 99th Indiana, Captain Josiah Farrar. All these regiments were infantry. Indiana thus furnished five of the regiments which maintained discipline and restored order.

The official reports made at the time by Generals William B. Woods, Charles R. Woods, William B. Hazen, John A. Logan, Oliver O. Howard and William T. Sherman, all of whom were in the city, confirm Colonel Stone in his observations and conclusions, and all agree in mentioning liquor as the primary cause of the conflagration.

Brevet Major-General C. R. Woods also attributes the origin of the fire to "Villains freed from the town prison."

Brevet Brigadier General W. B. Woods declares: "I am satisfied by the statements made to me by respectable citizens of the town that the fire was first set by the negro inhabitants."

Major General O. O. Howard reported the fire was caused by liquor "given escaped prisoners, convicts from the penitentiary just broken open, army followers and drunken soldiers."

Major General Logan, in his report, said, "the citizens had received our soldiers with bucketfuls of liquor * * * and for awhile all control was lost over the disorganized mass."

Major General Henry W. Slocum, in his article on "Sherman's March from Savannah to Bentonville," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, written in 1884, remarks:

"I do not believe General Sherman countenanced or was in any degree responsible for it. I believe the immediate cause of the disaster was a free use of whisky, which was supplied to the soldiers by the citizens with great liberality."

The officers of the army of the United States, if betrayed upon this one occasion, had no disposition to suffer a repetition of the calamity, and upon the next day, February 13th, Maj.-Gen. O. O. Howard, issued Special Field Order Number 42, from which the annexed paragraph is quoted:

"It having been brought to the attention of the commanding general that certain lawless and evil-disposed soldiers of this command have threatened to destroy the remainder of this city with fire, it is ordered that all commanding officers and provost-marshals use the utmost vigilance by establishing sufficient guards and patrols to prevent at all cost, even to the taking the life of any refractory soldier, a recurrence of the horrors of last night. Maj. Gen. F. P. Blair, commanding the Seventeenth Army Corps, will assign an officer to command of that part of the city northeast of Taylor street. To Brevet Brigadier-General W. B. Woods is assigned the command of that portion of the city southeast of Taylor street. They will appoint provost-marshals, who will be authorized to call upon the corps commander for sufficient force to prevent burning, pillaging, and all other acts subversive of good order and military discipline."

Before dismissing the question of the guilt for the burning of Columbia it should be recalled that enormous and devastating conflagrations occurred in Charleston, South Carolina, and Richmond, Virginia, during their evacuation by Confederate troops and before a hated Yankee had entered their corporation lines. If the Confederate troops or citizens thus burned two of their own principal cities why not a third?

Moreover, it is well known the Confederate people were often robbed and burned out by their own lawless troops. The identical cavalry under Hampton, which were the last Confederates to leave the unfortunate city of Columbia, were under charges of misconduct preferred by Southern citizens.

The following document from *Official Records*, Series I, Volume XLVII, page 1203, is to the point:

"Adjutant and Inspector General's Office,
Richmond, Virginia, February 16, 1865.

"Col. E. E. Portlock, Assistant Inspector-General:

"Colonel—Representations have been made from so many quarters prejudicial to the character of Wheeler's cavalry as to make it desirable

that an examination should be made respecting their foundation, as, if true, they are calculated (as they have been said to have done) to produce disaffection amongst the people and to bring reproach upon our arms. Of course the remarks and instructions are confidential, your order for the inspection being sufficient to secure you the necessary facilities.

"I am, colonel, respectfully, your obedient servant,

"R. H. CHILTON,

"Assistant Adjutant and Inspector General."

In a pamphlet entitled *The Sack and Destruction of Columbia*, William Gilmore Simms, a citizen of Columbia, and in the city at the time of the fire, states on the night of February 15 (before Sherman's army reached the city) there was riotous conduct, a number of highway robberies, and stores were broken open and robbed.

"The stores of merchants and planters, trunks of treasure, wares and goods of fugitives were so recklessly plundered that a fire broke out at the South Carolina railroad depot." (Simms.)

Major Chamblis, of the Confederate army, wrote:

"The straggling cavalry and rabble were stripping the warehouses and railroad depots. The city was in the wildest terror."

The Richmond (Va.) *Whig* of March 7, 1865, printed a letter from a correspondent saying:

"A party of Wheeler's cavalry, accompanied by their officers, dashed into town (February 16), tied their horses and as systematically as if they had been bred to the business, proceeded to break into stores along Main street and rob them of their contents."

All these outrages, pillagings and fires, mark you, were perpetrated by Confederate soldiers and citizens before a single Yankee had entered the city.

Returning now to Columbia when the Union soldiers entered it.

Inasmuch as the cotton bales were placed in the streets to be burned by order of General Beauregard, and considering the character of General Wheeler's cavalry as above portrayed, why is not the testimony of the Union generals and officials credible, to the effect that the cotton was burning when they entered the city, and doubtless set afire by the retreating Confederates? It will also be recalled these troops violated the rules of civilized warfare by resisting the advance of Colonel Stone, after the surrender of the city by the Mayor.

Finally, James Ford Rhodes, in his *History of the United States, 1850 to 1877*, remarks:

"The members of the British and American Mixed Commission (an Englishman, an American and the Italian minister at Washington) having to adjudicate on claims for 'property alleged to have been destroyed by the burning of Columbia, on the allegation that that city was wantonly fired by the army of General Sherman either under his orders or with his consent and permission,' disallowed all the claims, 'all the commissioners agreeing.' While they were not called upon to deliver a formal opinion in the case, the American agent was advised 'that the commissioners were unanimous in the conclusion that the conflagration which destroyed Columbia was not to be ascribed to either the intention or default of either the Federal or Confederate officers.'"

Columbia had a population of 8,000 people, the majority of whom were negroes. But the town was rich, full of refugees and their choicest possessions.

Eighty-four of the 124 blocks of the city, containing over 500 buildings and embracing the entire business quarter, were burned. The old state house, containing the legislative library of 25,000 volumes, five churches, the Ursuline convent, and the railroad depots were consumed.

The library and collection of paintings, engravings, Southern fossils, sharks' teeth, relics of aboriginal Mexico and the United States, historical documents of the Revolution, of the antiquarian and naturalist, Dr. Gibbes, were also destroyed.

Amongst the property destroyed by order of General Sherman after the fire were: quartermaster stores, printing and engraving departments, 25 powder mills, machine shops, and armory of the Confederate government. Nineteen locomotives—box cars, 1,000 bales of cotton, and all railroad buildings. Smoke stacks of factories were thrown over.

I learn from Hon. L. A. Griffith, Mayor of Columbia, that he is unable to find that any estimate was ever made of the aggregate losses. I should think five million dollars a fair estimate of the losses, public and private.

It is highly gratifying to me, a witness of Columbia's destruction, to know that a modern, growing and prosperous city has risen from the ashes of the burned town.

The Columbia of 1915 is unsurpassed in location, advantages of every description, and progressiveness by any municipality in the country. Its population is seven times greater than in 1865. I am sure every surviving member of Sherman's army wishes it and its people every blessing and happiness.

ADDENDA

From the General Sherman wrongfully described as a ruthless destroyer let us turn to an unconscious revelation of his heart of sympathy and kindness, shown in orders he need not have written, and in care of men of heroic mould who knew him affectionately as Uncle Billie.

“Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi,
“In the Field, on the Raleigh Road, March 15, 1865, 12 M.
(Received at 7 P. M.)

“Captain Keyser, U. S. Steamer Eolus, Fayetteville:

“Captain—I have no doubt, also, that a good many of our sick and footsore men will hang about the landing; they must not be allowed to suffer, though their officers should not have provided for them. If you find any such clinging about the landing, have them camp near your boat on this bank, and send word to General Dodge, chief quartermaster, to send a boat for them. If Colonel Garber, my chief quartermaster, is there, show him this letter, and he will attend to the details referred to in the last part of this letter, but if Colonel Garber is not there, I have no other alternative but to ask your kind assistance.

“Yours truly,

“W. T. SHERMAN, Major-General.”

Wade Hampton was the idol of the slave holding aristocracy of the South. His grandfather was a soldier of the Revolution under Sumter and Marion and rose to the rank of major-general in the war of 1812. He became immensely wealthy in land speculations and owned 3,000 slaves. The estate thus inherited by Wade Hampton of the Civil War period and his social status rendered him one of the acknowledged leaders of the Southern people. He was a brave soldier and was wounded three times in battle. He was a politician and led the white people of South Carolina in overthrowing the State government instituted in the process of reconstruction. Later he was a United States Senator from South Carolina. Senator Hampton was an orator also and always greatly *admired and beloved in the South.*

Colonel Michael C. Garber, Chief Quartermaster in the Field of the Military District of the Mississippi, as will be noted, was in charge of all property seized for the United States government in Columbia. Colonel Garber went into the United States army from Indiana but was a native of Virginia. He participated in the campaigns of Mill Spring, Cumberland Gap, Vicksburg, Texas, Red River, Atlanta and Sherman's March. He was continued in the

service after the war as Chief Quartermaster of the Department of North Carolina, and was tendered the position of Assistant Quartermaster in the Regular Army but preferred civil life.

"This responsible labor is under the charge of Colonel Garber, a gentleman of large heart and fertile brain, who has acted as chief quartermaster for the army during this campaign."—MAJOR GEORGE WARD NICHOLS, in *The Story of the Great March*.

"I at once appointed General Reuben Williams, Twelfth Indiana Infantry, provost-marshal of the post (Columbia) and by means of his efficiency and energy, and that of the officers and men under my command, was enabled to preserve comparative quiet and good order in the city while occupied by our army."—BREVET BRIGADIER-GENERAL WILLIAM B. WOODS, in official report dated Near Goldsborough, N. C., March 26, 1865.

General Williams was an Indiana newspaper man, founder and editor of the *Northern Indianian*, published at Warsaw. He was trusted by Sherman and Howard and was sent on a raid with mounted infantry to release, if possible, 20,000 Union prisoners held at Florence, near Columbia.