

Ordnance Office

Washington 30 August 1854

Captain C.P. Stone

Benicia Arsenal

Sir

I wrote you on the 19th instant that the Opinion of the Attorney General would be asked as to the validity of the title conveyed to the United States by the Deeds which you transmitted copies of to this office with your letter of 14 June last. I now enclose a copy of that Opinion which you will see is against the validity of the title.

If a valid fee simple title to that part of the land which is marked on the Plot received with your letter of 1st March 1852 as having been set off for Ordnance purposes (about ninety acres I believe) can be obtained, free from the objections stated by the Attorney General, you are authorized to pay as purchase money for it, so much of the \$5000. applicable to the purchase of a site, and included in the appropriation of \$33,985. as may be necessary to secure such title, and you will employ legal advice in securing it. But still the opinion of the Attorney General will be necessary before money can be expended in erecting buildings upon it.

I am Sir, respectfully

Your Obt. Servt.

A.K. Craig

Col Ord

P.S. It will be well that publicity not be given to this opinion of the Atty Genl. as it may be made improper use of ---- A.K.C.

_____ Biography _____



Col. H.K. Craig July 1851-April 1861

In June 1821, Captain Craig was transferred to the 3rd Artillery, and in December 1823, received his brevet majority for ten years' faithful service in one grade. During the early 1820s, Captain Craig supervised several lead mines in Missouri and in Illinois, and in May 1832, was promoted to the rank of major. At some point thereafter, he was assigned to the Ordnance Corps, and during the War with Mexico, served as Chief of Ordnance for General Taylor. For his services in the Battle of Monterrey, he was brevetted lieutenant colonel in September 1846. Following that battle, he and a small group of officers and men moved a group of twelve pounder cannon from the Monterrey battlefield to the town of Buena Vista, 67 miles away. This was accomplished between dusk and dawn on a rough road within a period of seven hours, despite the fact that the axle on the gun carriage supporting one of the cannon snapped and had to be replaced. Although General Santa Anna, the Mexican commander, had abruptly withdrawn from the battlefield before Colonel Craig and his men arrived, his action nevertheless won him and his staff a cordial mention in general orders. He also gave an excellent account of himself during the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de Palma. From 1848 until 1851, Colonel Craig served as an inspector of arsenals.

On 10 July 1851, Colonel Craig was appointed Chief of Ordnance with the rank of full colonel. During the ten years before the Civil War, budget allocations for the Army were cut back considerably, and Colonel Craig did as much as he could to ensure that adequate funding was available for the production and procurement of the necessary weapons and munitions for peacetime activity. He encouraged studies of foreign ordnance and supported efforts to keep a good supply of proven models of rifles, cannon, and similar equipment on hand. Breech loading rifles were extensively tested during his tenure as Chief of Ordnance, but were not adopted because of problems with the cartridges of that time. In 1855, however, the Ordnance Board decided to convert existing stocks of smoothbore muzzle loading muskets to .58-cal. rifled muskets, and the days of the smoothbore were numbered. Finally, a modified 12-pounder Napoleon was tested and went into production. Colonel Craig was regarded as an experienced, conscientious, and dedicated officer, although he held strong views and was sometimes acerbic with his subordinates.

In the spring of 1861, at the age of 70 and after nearly 48 years of Army service, Colonel Craig was relieved of his duties at the direction of the new Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, on the grounds that the Ordnance Department needed more vigorous leadership in light of the national emergency. Colonel Craig protested this action, but Secretary Cameron, who had consulted with General Winfield Scott, the Army's commanding general, stood firm. Colonel Craig then took the matter up with President Lincoln, but the harried new Chief Executive chose not to intervene. Colonel Craig nevertheless remained on duty for another two years in an advisory capacity, and retired on 1 June 1863 after nearly fifty years of service. On 13 March 1865, he was brevetted brigadier general for his service of over half a century to the Army and to Ordnance. General Craig lived the remaining six-and-one-half years of his life in Washington, where he died on 7 December 1869, aged 78.