

BHM 2019 021 45

Benicia Arsenal Cala

March 15th 1858

Col. Thomas Swords

Deputy Quartermaster General

Head Quart Dep't of Pacific

San Francisco, Cala

Sir;

I have the honor to submit the following for the Consideration and action of the General Commanding the Department and for your own, as Chief Quartermaster; and for reference and the decision of the proper authority.

Referring to the Enclosed map, the grounds at present occupied by the Benicia Arsenal, are indicated by the plain red lines, in addition to which an entire separate and distinct portion of the reserve, indicated by the yellow lines, has been assigned to the arsenal for Continuing the Construction of the same. Neither of these two tracts include the point at "H" Marked on the map. It was the unanimous opinion of the Board who examined the subject, that this point at "H" was the most eligible site that could be selected for an arsenal of construction. The recommendation of the Board on this matter embraced the whole water front Contiguous to the point at "H" and included the sites of the Quartermasters & Commissary's Stores.

Now a portion of this point "H" not including the sites of the stores of these Departments is much needed for the site of a large Arsenal building for small arms; to be constructed of the Benicia Sand Stone, quarried on the reserve; of which material two large magazines and two stores have already been erected on the grounds Contiguous to this point. There is now an appropriation of \$50,000 applicable to the construction of this building; which will be a permanent structure and last for ages. It would seem proper, therefore, that the most eligible site on the reserve should be given to it; especially when it can be done without interfering with any of the other Departments.

Where the old hulk, the "Juliet" lies, indicated on the map in deep water and an excellent place for an arsenal wharf.

The addition included in the yellow lines, being as before mentioned, a separate and distinct track from that at present occupied by the Arsenal, would not be required if a portion of the point at "H" be assigned to it; indeed, it is doubtful whether in any event it could be best, on account of its location (not being contiguous to the grounds where the present buildings are) to build upon it at all. This addition, therefore, might be relinquished to the other Departments.

The following (an official copy of which is enclosed) was the decision of the Hon. Secretary of War at the time, making the enlargement referred to herein, as included in the yellow lines, viz:

“The ordnance tract will be enlarged by the addition of the space marked on the map by K.E.F.G.H, which is understood to be the addition recommended by the Board, in case the sites of the Quartermaster’s and Commissary stores were not to be taken for this purpose.”

(Signed) Jefferson Davis

July 3rd 1857

Secretary Of War

The proposition which I have the honor respectfully to submit and recommend, contains the same condition; viz; that the sites of the Quatermaster’s and Commissary stores are not to be taken for this purpose, and is as follows. Viz; Instead of the Enlargement of the Ordnance tract directed July 3rd 1857, that Enlargement will be relinquished to the Quartermaster’s Department, and the Ordnance tract will be Enlarged by the addition of the space marked on the map by Q.R.S.J.W; it being understood that the sites of the Quartermasters and Commissary stores are not to be taken for this purpose.

I do not doubt, if this proposition had have been before the Hon. Secretary, who directed the Enlargement referred to, but that it would have been approved by him; because it interfeies with none of the other Departments, and gives to the Ordnance Department what it is much in need of. This honors, is only mentioned to show that it is not intruded in any way, by this proposition, to undo the work of the previous Hon. Secretary, but rather to carry it out . And I hope that I have been able to state the case that it will appear best for the public interest (that it is so I have no doubt) to adopt the proposition herein named and that therefore, it will receive the recommendation of the General Commanding and your own, and for the same reasons, will Command itself to the favorable Consideration and approval of the Hon. Secretary of War.

For the convenience of action of the Hon. Secretary of War, I have caused this proposition &c to be written out on the face of the Enclosed map, and if approved by him, the map itself might be returned to the Head Quarters of the Dep’t of the Pacific, and the necessary orders in the case issue therefrom.

Very Respectfully

Your Obt. Servant

F.D. Callender

Capt. Ord: Exesdy Benicia Arsenal