

Ordnance Office

Washington 17<sup>th</sup>. April 1855,

Captain C.P. Stone

Benicia Arsenal

Sir

Colonel Ripley was written to on the 13 instant, as to what is still deemed necessary by the Attorney General before he can certify the title of the U.S. to the lands at Benicia to be valid. I noted on the envelope that if he was absent it should be opened by you, in order that you might be apprised as soon as possible of what is still required.

Your letter of 4<sup>th</sup> ultimo was received 9<sup>th</sup> instant. I see by it that you suppose mine of 29<sup>th</sup> of January last was intended to censure your cause in the inde\_\_\_\_\_ to secure this title. In this you are in error. The last letter of yours that had been received when mine of 29<sup>th</sup>. of January was written, was that of 31<sup>st</sup> of December stating that you had had to direct proceedings to be instituted in the U.S. District Court to force Larkin, Semples heirs, and Phelps to clear the title of the U.S. from the conditions of their Deed of April 1849. It was the loss of time which would probably ensue from this going into court, that I dreaded, and which I supposed would have been obviated by a Deed of purchase, besides that such a Deed would render further legislation by the State unnecessary, as the State Act of 27 April 1852 would then have been sufficient. It was not till twenty eight days after this, that your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> of January was received, inclosing the relinquishment of the conditions by Larkin and by Phelps, with the opinion given by the Counsel whom you had employed, that it was not necessary to obtain the releases of Semples heirs, and which enabled me again to offer the case for the Attorney Gen'ls opinion.

It now appears by your letter of 4<sup>th</sup> ultimo, that you have also obtained further legislation, by which the State assents to the U.S. holding the lands acquired as they were by the Deed of April 1849. and I am satisfied by your explanations, that your efforts to secure the whole tract, have been judicious.

I am Sir respectfully

Your Obt. Serv.

A.K. Craig

Col Ord

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.