1991

A breach of conduct : James A. Garfield and the court-martial of Fitz John Porter

William Warren Holland
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Holland, William Warren, "A breach of conduct : James A. Garfield and the court-martial of Fitz John Porter" (1991). *Master's Theses*. 199.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.6mym-26y5>

https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/199

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 1345806

**A breach of conduct: James A. Garfield and the court-martial
of Fitz John Porter**

Holland, William Warren, M.A.

San Jose State University, 1991

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

A BREACH OF CONDUCT:
JAMES A. GARFIELD AND THE COURT-MARTIAL OF FITZ JOHN PORTER

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Social Science
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
William Warren Holland
July, 1991

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Dr. Richard Cramer

Dr. Larry Engelmann

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Dr. Damon Nalty

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

A BREACH OF CONDUCT:
JAMES A. GARFIELD AND THE COURT-MARTIAL OF FITZ JOHN PORTER

by William W. Holland

This thesis focuses upon the questionable conduct of a future President of the United States, James A. Garfield, as he served on the court in the highly controversial trial of Union General Fitz John Porter in 1862. The conduct of Garfield is examined as it related to the political atmosphere of the time, as well as toward individuals directly and indirectly related to the trial.

Research revealed that James A. Garfield was a politically-motivated individual who comprised standards of correct military and judicial conduct by continuing to serve on a trial court when his objectivity in the matter had been compromised. It was also a less-than-objective Garfield who served in Congress in the post-trial period, when Porter sought redress from that body. When President Garfield was assassinated in 1881, General Porter had still not been able to clear his name.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of the most pleasant tasks upon completing a project is the opportunity to acknowledge the many individuals who have lent their time and effort to a successful conclusion. Without them, my thesis could not have been completed.

Foremost among those to whom I am indebted is Professor Richard Cramer, the chairman of my thesis committee at San Jose State University. Knowledgeable and inspiring as a teacher, Dr. Cramer applied these qualities in keeping me focused upon the topic. My two other committee members, Professor Damon Nalty and Professor Larry Engelmann, also deserve my thanks for the high standards of scholarship they established.

I am indebted to Tim Farrell of the English Department at Gunn High School for his valuable assistance in editing, and suggestions for improving the manuscript. One could not have a more understanding and helpful friend.

It is a special thanks that I extend to Mr. James Byrne, my history teacher as a senior in high school. His outstanding teaching qualities have always been an inspiration to me in my teaching, and have led to my love of history.

Finally, thanks to my family for their care and understanding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I	THE CAREER OF GENERAL FITZ JOHN PORTER 3
	Pre-war Background 4
	The Outbreak of War 6
	Relieved of Command 8
	Quest for Vindication 9
	The Schofield Board and Vindication 10
II	JAMES P. GARFIELD: SOLDIER AND 12
	POLITICIAN 12
	Pre-war Activity 12
	In Command of the Forty-second Ohio 14
	Congressional Aspirations 17
	Activities in Washington, D.C. 18
	Rosecrans' Chief of Staff 19
	Congressional Services 20
	Elected President 21
III	THE RADICAL ATMOSPHERE 23
	The Anti-McClellan Element 24
	Edwin M. Stanton Versus McClellan 25
	Salmon P. Chase Versus McClellan 26
	General Irvin McDowell Versus McClellan 27
IV	GARFIELD'S LOSS OF OBJECTIVITY 29
	Contempt Toward McClellan 30
	Garfield's Relationship With Salmon P. 33
	Chase 35
	The McDowell Friendship 35
	The Hidden Manuscript 38
V	CONCLUSION 43
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	47

INTRODUCTION

In late August of 1862 the Second Battle of Bull Run was fought in the Virginia countryside. The outcome of the battle was to reflect that of the first Battle of Bull Run, a victory for the Confederate Army. In command of a segment of the Union forces during the battle was Major General Fitz John Porter. Shortly after the Union defeat, General Porter was court-martialed on charges ranging from disobedience of orders, to cowardice in the face of the enemy. Because of the political atmosphere of the time, the trial of General Porter was quite controversial and held the attention of the nation during its duration. One aspect of the controversy dealt directly with a man who would later be elected President of the United States, James Abram Garfield.

While researching material for a paper on the Civil War service of President Garfield, investigation revealed he was one of the officers who served on the court during the trial of General Porter. Further research revealed the distinct possibility that General Garfield had placed himself in a position where he had lost his objectivity in the matter and should not have served on the court. At this point, curiosity took over and further research was begun relative to the role of Garfield.

After being convicted and cashiered from the Army in January of 1863, Fitz John Porter fought an almost continuous battle to vindicate himself that lasted until 1886. In August of that year, President Grover Cleveland signed the bill that would clear Porter and reinstated him to the regular army rank he held at the time of the trial. Of course, Porter did not re-enter the army and his request to be placed upon the retirement list was granted.

If Garfield had compromised his objectivity in the Porter case, as a member of the trial court he certainly was in a position that could be quite detrimental to Porter. In addition, Garfield served as a leading member of the Republican Party in Congress during the time when Porter was appealing to that body in an attempt to vindicate himself. During this time, Garfield was certainly in a position where he could help or hinder Porter's cause.

The intent of this study is to establish the fact that, at the time of the trial of General Porter, General Garfield had indeed compromised his objectivity in the matter, that he should not have served on the trial court, and that this lack of objectivity could only hinder Porter's cause as he appealed to Congress for vindication.

CHAPTER I

THE CAREER OF GENERAL FITZ JOHN PORTER

On the tenth of January, 1863, the court-martial trial of Union Major General Fitz John Porter was concluded. The presiding officer of the court, Major General David Hunter, ordered the court cleared, and then the members of the court began deliberation over a verdict. Later that same afternoon, the court reconvened. The president of the court announced that a verdict had been reached and that it would be promulgated in due time. He then adjourned the court.

The short amount of time it took for the court to arrive at a verdict greatly surprised General Porter's highly respected lawyer, Reverdy Johnson. However, he turned to his client and, in an effort to reassure him, made a statement that would ironically set the tone for the years of controversy that would follow Porter and the results of the trial:

Fitz, these men are officers of the army and have sworn to judge you by the evidence, and by the evidence alone, if they live up to their oaths, you will be commanding your corps again in a few days.¹

¹Otto Eisenschiml, The Celebrated Case of Fitz John Porter (New York: The Bobbs Merrill Company, Inc., 1950), 15.

But General Porter would not be at the head of his corps ever again. For on January 21, 1863, the verdict was announced and confirmed by the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. Major General Fitz John Porter, being found guilty, was to be cashiered from the service of the United States and would be disqualified from ever again holding an office under the Government of the United States.

General Porter was bluntly informed of the verdict by a reporter he had met quite by accident on a Washington, D.C. street the afternoon of the twenty-first. It was news that naturally came both as a shock and a disappointment. But it was not the end of the battle for Porter. For he believed that he had been done an injustice and would not rest until he was vindicated. His struggle for absolution would last for more than two decades.

Pre-war Background

Fitz John Porter was a graduate of the West Point Class of 1845. He saw extensive service during the Mexican War and was breveted to the rank of major for meritorious service during the struggle to capture Mexico City. Post-war service would take him to a variety of posts and assignments.

In 1849, Porter returned to West Point as an artillery instructor. In 1853, he was appointed Post Adjutant by Robert E. Lee, the Superintendent of West Point.

During his tenure at West Point, Fitz John Porter served on the court-martial trial of a plebe named John M. Schofield. No thanks to a relentless Porter, Cadet Schofield was allowed to continue his education at West Point. Ironically in 1878 John M. Schofield, now a Major-general, would be appointed the head of a board convened to examine the record of the 1863 trial of Major General Fitz John Porter.²

In 1857, now Major, Porter was assigned to duty in the Utah Territory. There he would serve as the Assistant Adjutant General to General Albert Sidney Johnston. General Johnston would later serve with distinction in the Army of the Confederate States of America. Porter would form a personal and professional friendship with General Johnston that his enemies would use against him during his later trial.

In November of 1860, Major Porter was assigned to supervise and report on the status of the fortifications being constructed for the defense of the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina. In a report filed on November 11, 1860 with the War Department, he commented upon the

²John M. Schofield, Forty-Six Years in the Army (New York: The Century Company, 1897), 443.

physical work as well as the state of command at Forts Moultrie, Sumter, and Castle Pinckney.³

The Outbreak of War

On April 5th, Porter returned to New York City from Texas, where he had successfully aided several hundred Union troops garrisoned along the Rio Grande, in returning to Union territory. When the Civil War began on April 12, 1861, Porter was serving on the staff of the Adjutant General in Washington, D.C.

On May 14, 1861, Fitz John Porter was commissioned a Colonel in the Regular Army of the United States, and on May 17, he was appointed a Brigadier General of Volunteers.

On July 2, General Porter was engaged in combat for the first time. He was in a Union force commanded by General Robert Patterson that crossed the Potomac into western Virginia near Harper's Ferry. Confederate forces were engaged at Falling Waters, or Hoke's Run, in an indecisive skirmish. Among his opponents with the Confederate forces were General Thomas J. Jackson and Colonel J.E.B. Stuart.

³The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Volume II (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), 70-72.

At this time, neither man had acquired the fame later accomplishments would bring him.⁴

In August of 1861, Colonel Porter was ordered to Washington, D.C. and put in command of the training of the raw troops in service around the capital. It was during this assignment that he would begin a relationship with General George B. McClellan that would mark the turning point in his career.

As soon as he could, McClellan made Porter a brigadier and gave him his own command. In his memoirs he stated that Porter was the best general officer that he commanded. Unfortunately, the devotion that Porter developed toward his commanding officer would cause him a great deal of harm in the future.⁵

In late June of 1862, the battles that have come to be called the Seven Day's Campaign, began around the Confederate Capital of Richmond, Virginia. General Porter commanded the Fifth Corps of the Army of the Potomac and first engaged the enemy forces at Mechanicsville on the afternoon of June 26, 1862. The next day, Porter's troops fought the Confederates at Gaines Mill and then withdrew

⁴Burke Davis, They Called Him Stonewall: A Life of Lt. General Thomas J. Jackson, CSA (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1954), 46.

⁵General George Brinton McClellan, McClellan's Own Story (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1887), 139.

across the Chickahominy River to rejoin the main body of the army under General McClellan. On July 1st, Porter's involvement in the Seven Days' Campaign ended with the Battle of Malvern Hill.

General Porter and his Fifth Corps would again see combat in late August of 1862, during the Second Battle of Manassas. Between the 28th and 30th of August, General Porter would take part in the battle that would end as the first battle of the same name did, in a Union defeat. Conditions would evolve during this period that would eventually lead to his court-martial.⁶

Even as the intrigues swirled about both him and General McClellan, General Porter would again be in command of his Corps as the Union Army, under General McClellan, moved into Maryland to meet the Confederate forces. On September 17th, 1862 the Battle of Antietam was fought to an inconclusive end.

Relieved of Command

After the Battle of Antietam, the political intrigue that had been somewhat embryonic now began to mature. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and the anti-McClellan faction began their attacks anew. On November 5, 1862, President Lincoln ordered that General McClellan be relieved

⁶Eisenschiml, 71.

of his command and be replaced by general Ambrose Burnside. On November 10th, General Porter was relieved of the command of the Fifth Corps and replaced by General Joseph Hooker. On the 25th of November, a formal order was issued for the court-martial of Major General Fitz John Porter.⁷

Quest for Vindication

The guilty verdict was not immediately made public, nor was any information given as to how the individual members of the court voted. With the confirmation of the verdict by President Lincoln, Fitz John Porter was now a civilian.

During the two decades following his conviction, Porter tirelessly devoted himself to the effort to secure exoneration. With help from his friends and fellow soldiers, he worked to gather the evidence that would help his cause. This fight eventually led him to the halls of Congress, and to the White House itself, before he achieved success.

Appeals to President Andrew Johnson were to no avail. Information sent to the President by way of the Office of the Attorney General had been "lost." Any power that President Johnson might have used was lost to the President when he was impeached in 1868. Even though he was

⁷Battles and Leaders (New York: The Century Company, 1884), 103.

acquitted, Johnson was not in a position to help himself, let alone Fitz John Porter.

Shortly after his inauguration in March of 1869, President Ulysses S. Grant was sent an appeal by Porter. The appeal was in pamphlet form and was sixty-four pages in length. President Grant did not acknowledge nor refuse the appeal; he just ignored it. An appeal during Grant's second term met with the same results.

Rutherford B. Hayes had been elected to the presidency in 1876, and with him Fitz Porter saw new hope. A close friend, Theodore F. Randolph, was now serving in the Senate representing New Jersey and could be counted upon for support from the congressional side. Personal intercession by Randolph with President Hayes bore positive results. By the order of President Hayes, a board was to be convened in June to examine the case of Fitz John Porter. The board was to report its findings to the President, and recommend, in the name of justice, what action he take. This four-person panel became known as the Schofield Board, after its president, Major General John M. Schofield, the man whose court-martial as a Cadet at West Point was served upon by Fitz John Porter.

The Schofield Board and Vindication

The Schofield Board convened on June 25, 1878 at West Point, New York. By the time the board adjourned on January

3, 1879, 142 witnesses had been heard. On March 19, 1879 the board reconvened and presented its findings. The final conclusion of the board was a welcome sound to Fitz John Porter:

In our opinion, justice requires such action as may be necessary to annul and set aside the findings and sentence of the court martial in the case of Major General Fitz John Porter and to restore him to the position of which that sentence deprived him.⁸

Even though the board clearly found in his favor, Porter's struggle to vindicate himself was not yet at an end.

At the time the Schofield Board announced its findings, President Hayes was in a politically touchy position. He was a Republican President with his party not solidly behind him. Further complicating the situation was the fact that the Democrats had won control of both Houses of Congress. Under these circumstances, President Hayes chose to transmit the report to Congress without recommendation.

For the next seven years the case of Fitz John Porter would be debated publicly, as well as in Congress. Not until President Cleveland signed the bill reinstating Porter, on July 14, 1886, would it end. The prejudice and political intrigue that had originally caused him to be brought to trial was finally overcome.

⁸Eisenschiml, 249.

CHAPTER II

JAMES A. GARFIELD: SOLDIER AND POLITICIAN

Pre-war Activity

When Fort Sumter was fired upon on April 12, 1861, James Abram Garfield was twenty-nine years of age and was service his first term as a member of the Ohio State Senate. A Republican, he presented Portage and Summit Counties.

James Garfield had joined the Republican Party in 1856 and was active in the presidential campaign of John C. Fremont that same year. He entered politics himself in 1859, when he ran for, and was elected to, the state senate on a strong anti-slavery platform.

Garfield was pleased when the Republican ticket of Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin won the election of 1860. The president-elect was in Columbus, Ohio on February 1st, 1861, and Garfield was in attendance when Lincoln addressed the Ohio Legislature. Impressed by the tone of Lincoln's speech, Garfield wrote to this close friend, Burke Hinsdale, that "after the long dreary period of Buchanan's weakness and cowardly imbecility, the people will hail a strong and vigorous leader."¹ Even though he would later

¹Mary L. Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters: Correspondence Between James Abram Garfield and Burke Aaron Hinsdale (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1949), 54-56.

come to criticize President Lincoln, Garfield would remain a staunch supporter of the North's cause.

Shortly after hostilities commenced, Senator Garfield was called to confer with Ohio Governor William Dennison about the role the state would play in the conflict. Working with a close friend and a fellow Senator, Jacob Cox, Garfield was a driving force behind emergency proposals rushed through the legislature that greatly aided Ohio in preparing for war. A portion of the measures were in response to a call to the states for seventy-five thousand soldiers issued by President Lincoln on April 15, 1861.

In a letter to Governor Dennison dated April 17, 1861, Senator Garfield expressed a desire to serve the state in a military capacity. Dennison immediately sent him to Cleveland to help recruit and organize two regiments of volunteers. Garfield hoped that he would be elected to command one of the regiments, but he lost the election for a colonelcy. Disappointed, he was offered a lieutenant-colonelcy in the Twenty-fourth Ohio by Governor Dennison, but the offer was declined. Very little time would pass before Garfield would again prevail upon the governor for an opportunity to serve militarily.²

²Allan Peskin, Garfield (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1978), 16-17.

In Command of the Forty-second Ohio

In late July, 1861, several new Ohio Regiments were being formed. On July 27th, Governor Dennison offered a lieutenant-colonelcy in one of these regiments to Garfield. Traveling at the time, Garfield did not know of Dennison's offer until August 7th. On August 14th, he wrote to his wife that he was accepting the position and would wire the governor to that effect. Garfield was ordered to report to Camp Chase, Ohio on August 16th, and upon reporting he was appointed a colonel and given command of the Forty-second Regiment of the Ohio Volunteers.

The Forty-second Ohio Infantry began receiving recruits at Camp Chase in September of 1861. The regiment would remain at Camp Chase until mid-December, when, its training completed, orders would be received moving it to Columbus for location in the field.

In Columbus, the regiment boarded cars of the Cincinnati and Columbus Railroad for a trip that would take it to Cincinnati. From Cincinnati the regiment was transported by steamer to Catlettsburg, Kentucky, arriving on December 19th. Colonel Garfield accompanied his regiment to Cincinnati, but there he was ordered to army headquarters

in Louisville, Kentucky to meet with General Don Carlos Buell.³

On the evening of December 16, 1861, Garfield met with General Buell and received orders that his command was to be used to help drive the Confederate forces out of Eastern Kentucky. The Confederate troops were under the command of Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall and were located in the Big Sandy River Valley. The Big Sandy River runs in a northerly direction from the Cumberland Mountains and joins the Ohio River at Catlettsburg, Kentucky. A branch of the Big Sandy, West Fork, joins it at a town named Louisa. Here, Colonel Garfield rejoined his command on December 23, 1861. In January of 1862, Garfield's command engaged the Confederate forces in two significant engagements.

On January 5, 1862, Garfield's cavalry met and scattered an enemy force at Jennies Creek. On January 10th, heavy fighting took place at the Battle of Middle Creek, and the Confederate forces again withdrew. As a result of these victories, the Confederate force retreated toward Virginia and would not threaten the valley again.⁴

³Frederick D. Williams, The Wildlife of the Army: Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), 49-50.

⁴War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Confederate and Union Armies (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1885), vol. VIII, 27-29.

Garfield's victories, although not of great significance themselves, did a great deal to boost sagging Northern morale. They also aided Garfield's military career, as well as adding to his popularity in Ohio. On March 19, 1862, Colonel Garfield was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, with the commission dated from January 10th. In Ohio, the General Assembly passed a resolution praising Garfield for his battlefield successes.

On March 23, 1862, General Garfield and his command were ordered to join the Army of the Ohio under General Don Carlos Buell at Louisville. Garfield arrived in Louisville on April 1st and was ordered to turn his command over to General George W. Morgan. He was then to report to General Buell, who was in the field at the time. Locating General Buell near Columbia, Tennessee, Garfield was assigned command of the Twentieth Brigade, Sixth Division, Army of the Ohio.

When the Battle of Shiloh began on April 6, 1862, Garfield's brigade was attempting to secure transportation to the front. By the time the brigade reached Pittsburgh Landing, it was the afternoon of April 7th. By this time the fighting had subsided, and Garfield's command did not engage the enemy.⁵

⁵Ibid., vol. X, pt. II, 107.

In April and May of 1862, Garfield would take part in the siege of Corinth, Mississippi. Corinth fell and the Union commander proclaimed it a great victory. Garfield was quite critical of Halleck's claim and of the leaders of the armies as well. He felt that these men suffered from a lack of generalship and patriotism as a result of being "West Point trained." Later correspondence would indicate that he would retain this bias. In June and July of 1862, Garfield's command spent time in Mississippi and Alabama but did not see any combat.

Congressional Aspirations

In July, General Garfield spent most of the month serving on the court-martial trial of Colonel John B. Turchin. Turchin was accused of sacking the town of Athens, Alabama in retaliation for the death of a soldier under his command. Garfield, suffering from maladies that were common due to the poor sanitary conditions of the era, had become ill and had to finish the trial being carried to and from the courtroom on a litter. Due to his extended illness, Garfield applied for a leave that was granted in late July. He arrived in Ohio in early August, and while recovering he again became politically active.

A new Congressional District, the nineteenth, had been recently formed in Ohio, and Garfield decided to become a candidate. At first, his writings indicated a slight

interest in serving in Congress. But as he became sicker and his illness lingered, the army life began to wear him down. On June 10, 1862, he wrote to his friend Harry Rhodes, "a seat in Congress is preferred to my place in the Army."⁶

On September 2, 1862, the Republican nominating convention met in Garrettsville, Ohio, and nominated Garfield on the eighth ballot. In October, he won the Congressional seat over the Democratic candidate, D. B. Woods. Unfortunately, Garfield could not celebrate his victory with family and friends. On September 12th, he had been ordered to Washington, D.C., arriving on the 19th. During his stay in the capital, he had the opportunity to meet with some very important political leaders.

Activities in Washington, D.C.

He was invited to dine at the home of the Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, a fellow Ohioan. Shortly after the occasion, Garfield was invited to be a house guest of Secretary Chase, an invitation he cordially accepted.

General Garfield also met with President Lincoln and the Secretary of War, Edwin P. Stanton. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a possible campaign in Florida to be

⁶Williams, 111-112.

led by General Garfield. This plan never came to fruition.⁷

The latter portion of Garfield's stay in Washington was spent serving on the court-martial trial of General Fitz John Porter. He stayed in Washington to finish the trial and was then ordered to a new command.

Rosecrans' Chief of Staff

On January 23, 1863, General Garfield reported to Major General William S. Rosecrans at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. After a short period of adjustment, Rosecrans felt that Garfield was a capable officer who would be an asset to his command. In February he offered Garfield the position of Chief of Staff, which was accepted.⁸

By the end of the summer of 1863, Union forces in Tennessee successfully completed the Tullahoma Campaign. By mid-September they had occupied the city of Chattanooga. Moving south of the city, Rosecrans' forces were confronted by a Confederate force under the command of General Braxton Bragg. On September 19-20, 1863, these forces clashed at the Battle of Chickamauga. Due to a communications error on the second day of the battle, Confederate forces were able to exploit a gap in the Union lines and force the Union

⁷Ibid., 140-143.

⁸Ibid., 240-241.

troops back to Chattanooga. General Garfield was quite active during the two-day battle, both on the staff level and in the field. Chickamauga would mark the end of the military service of James Garfield, for Congress was soon to convene and the new Congressman-elect from Ohio was anxious to begin his service in Washington.

Congressional Services

When the 38th Congress convened on December 7, 1863, James Abram Garfield was its second-youngest member. From this time forth, he would gradually gain the power and recognition that would lead to his nomination as his party's candidate for President in 1880.

As a first-year Congressman, Garfield was assigned to serve on the Military Affairs Committee. Eventually, he would serve on the majority of the most prominent and powerful committees in the House of Representatives.

After re-election in 1864, Garfield was appointed to the Ways and Means Committee. In 1867 he became the chairman of this committee.

In March of 1866, Garfield appeared before the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Ex Parte Milligan. The case dealt with suspension of the right of habeas corpus during the Civil War. Garfield pleaded the case for the defendants, which ended in a unanimous verdict in their favor. As a result of the success in this case, Garfield's

services as a lawyer were in demand and he was able to supplement his congressional salary substantially.⁹

In 1869, Garfield was appointed to the Committee on Banking and Currency. Much of his time on this committee was dedicated to reducing the debt incurred by the Civil War, as well as working to re-establish the nation's credit.

From 1871 through 1875, Garfield served as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, a position more powerful than the Ways and Means Committee.

In July of 1876, Garfield became the minority leader in the House of Representatives when James G. Blaine became a Senator. On January 27, 1877, he was appointed to serve on the electoral commission appointed to settle the disputed votes in the Rutherford B. Hayes/Samuel Tilden presidential election. He served on the committee until March 1, when Hayes was declared the winner by an electoral count of 185 to 184.¹⁰

Elected President

In January of 1880, Garfield was elected to the United States Senate from Ohio, by the Ohio General Assembly. This success was to be short-lived, for in June of that year he

⁹Richard O. Bates, The Gentleman From Ohio: An Introduction to James A. Garfield (Durham, NC: Moore Publishing Company, 1973), 33.

¹⁰Ibid, 135.

was nominated by the Republican Party as its candidate for President of the United States. Support gradually built for Garfield when none of the early nominees was able to secure the majority of votes needed for nomination. He achieved the majority needed for the nomination on the thirty-sixth ballot. Garfield and his running mate, Chester A. Arthur, won the election in November by defeating the Democratic ticket of Winfield S. Hancock and William H. English by an electoral vote of 214 to 155.¹¹

There is no way of telling how Garfield would have reacted to the actions of Fitz John Porter in his struggle to vindicate himself. For on July 2, 1881, he was the victim of a bullet fired by Charles J. Gulteau at the Washington railroad station. Garfield clung to life for over two months, but on September 19, 1881 he died at Elberton, New Jersey.

Between the time of the verdict in the Porter trial in 1863, and the time of his death in 1881, Garfield was in a position in Congress from which he could have helped or hindered Porter's cause. But Garfield's opinion toward the verdict in the Porter case had not changed, as his actions during this period will serve to illustrate.

¹¹Bates, 289.

CHAPTER III

THE RADICAL ATMOSPHERE

At this point it would seem that the relationship between Generals Fitz John Porter and James Abram Garfield had routinely taken place.

A future president of the United States, while in the course of his military service, had served on the court-martial of an officer with a distinguished record.

Although the trial was a much-publicized and controversial one, on the surface, there is no reason to believe that General Garfield did not carry out his duties in an honest and objective manner. But a closer examination of the political climate at the time would suggest that the treatment of General Porter was less than objective. The political climate had created an atmosphere which would engulf both Porter and Garfield, an atmosphere created by the Radical Republicans and the way they felt the war should be prosecuted.

The Radical Republicans hated slavery as well as its political representatives. The Radicals viewed the Civil War as an opportunity to destroy slavery and the political power of the South. There is no doubt that

They loved the negro less for himself than as an instrument with which they might fasten

Republican political and economic control upon the south.¹

The Radicals were led by aggressive and vindictive individuals in both Houses of Congress. In the House of Representatives, Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania championed the radical cause, while in the Senate, they were led by Charles Sumner of Massachusetts and Zach Chandler of Michigan.

The Anti-McClellan Element

The Radicals felt that the war needed to be prolonged in order for their political goals to be met. The Radicals held the view that if General George B. McClellan was allowed to carry out his plans, he could possibly end the war too quickly to suit them. Since they could not allow the war to end before the power of the South had been diminished, McClellan had to be ousted. The campaign against McClellan also focused on individuals who held the same beliefs toward the war effort as he did. General Fitz John Porter was one of McClellan's closest friends, and therefore he would eventually become a target of the Radicals.

In the anti-McClellan campaign, the radical element included several individuals with whom General Garfield

¹Harry T. Williams, Lincoln and the Radicals (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1941), 6.

formed a rather strong bond during his stay in Washington. Garfield's relationship with Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, and General Irvin S. McDowell, anti-McClellanites all, would clearly persuade him of the correctness of the Radical cause. His anti-McClellan stance evolved to a position which greatly altered his ability to react objectively while serving on the Porter court.

Edwin M. Stanton Versus McClellan

When Edwin M. Stanton replaced Simon Cameron as Secretary of War on January 20th, 1862, the Radicals in Congress now had a cabinet member who was willing to help them make the war last until their goals had been achieved. Of course, helping the radicals meant hindering General McClellan and any officers who supported him.

Stanton's animosity toward McClellan reached its zenith shortly after the Second Battle of Bull Run. With the support of Treasury Secretary Chase, Stanton drew up a remonstrance against McClellan which, in addition to other charges, requested that General McClellan be relieved of his command. Although he never presented the document to President Lincoln, Stanton had lost all confidence in McClellan and was uncomfortable that he was still in command

of the Army of the Potomac.² In addition Stanton's attitude toward "McClellanite" officers is made quite clear by his relationship with the Committee on the Conduct of the War, a body dominated by Radical Republicans. Pleased that McClellan was again under pressure, Stanton provided information to Republican Senators that was used to harass other West Point-trained officers.

Salmon P. Chase Versus McClellan

A concentrated effort by Radical forces helped secure the appointment of Salmon P. Chase as Secretary of the Treasury. Resigning his seat in the United States Senate, Chase accepted the appointment offered by Lincoln in March of 1861. By the middle of 1862, Chase had clearly sided with the Radicals and was definitely anti-McClellan.

In July of that year, Secretary Chase made a personal visit to President Lincoln and made his feelings toward General McClellan quite clear. He felt that McClellan should be removed from command due to the "necessity of having a general in that command who would cordially and efficiently cooperate with the movement of Pope and

²Benjamin M. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton, The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 218-222.

others."³ Chase felt that McClellan was certainly disloyal to the Administration, although he could not fault his loyalty to the country. Chase also urged the removal of McClellan citing financial reasons. The Secretary felt that if McClellan remained in command, confidence in the war effort would diminish and make the already difficult task of selling bonds to finance the war even more acute.

By late August of 1862, when Chase joined with Stanton in the remonstrance intended for Lincoln, his opinion of McClellan had not changed. After the Second Battle of Bull Run, Chase wrote that

he (Stanton) has long believed, and so have I, that General McClellan ought not to be trusted with the command of any army of the Union; and the events of the last few days have greatly strengthened our judgment.⁴

Ironically, the events referred to surround the Union defeat at Second Bull Run, the same battle from which would stem the court-martial charges against the close ally of McClellan, General Fitz John Porter.

General Irvin McDowell Versus McClellan

Another Union officer who had fought during the Second Battle of Bull Run was General Irvin McDowell. The pro-

³David Donald, ed., Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1954) 218-222.

⁴Ibid, 116.

radical McDowell, who later give damaging testimony against Porter, was disliked by McClellan. General McDowell, a fellow Ohioan, had long been a favorite of Secretary Chase. In fact, McDowell was appointed the first commander of Army of the Potomac with help from Chase. McDowell favored the Radical views and his relationship with McClellan was tenuous, at best.

The relationship had become strained, during and after the failed Peninsular Campaign. Even though he had followed the orders of the President, McDowell was blamed by McClellan and Porter for not having his troops in a position to aid them, and he was criticized by McClellan for McDowell's involvement with the intrigue surrounding his command. On April 18, 1862, McClellan confided to President Lincoln that

after all that I have heard of things which have occurred since I left Washington and before, I would prefer that General McDowell should not again be assigned to duty with me.⁵

It was into this political clime that General Garfield entered when he was assigned to the nation's capital in September of 1862.

⁵George B. McClellan, McClellan's Own Story (New York: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1887), 294-295.

CHAPTER IV

GARFIELD'S LOSS OF OBJECTIVITY

There is no doubt that the trial of General Fitz John Porter was politically motivated. It was common knowledge that the trial was aimed at General George B. McClellan. Lincoln's personal secretary, John Hay, wrote that "Porter was the most magnificent soldier in the Army of the Potomac, ruined by his devotion to McClellan."¹ Although Garfield did not have a personal animus toward Porter, his dislike of McClellan and his personal relationships with anti-McClellanites, Salmon P. Chase and General Irvin McDowell, certainly placed him in an anti-Porter posture. When Fitz John Porter was asked if he had any objection to any member of the court, he replied in the negative. If he had known of Garfield's personal feelings toward General McClellan, as well as his personal relationships with Salmon P. Chase and General Irvin McDowell, he certainly would have challenged Garfield's right to serve on the court due to an obvious lack of objectivity.

General Garfield came to the capital, in September of 1862 as an unemployed brigadier seeking an assignment. He was also a young Republican politician with aspirations that

¹William Roscoe Thayer, The Life and Letters of John Hay (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), vol. 2, 31.

would be aided tremendously by associating himself with individuals in the capital who could aid his career. Garfield did not delay in forming such relationships, as his friendship with Salmon P. Chase illustrates. Nor did he hesitate to positioning himself against the enemies of his benefactors.

Contempt Toward McClellan

Of his scorn for General McClellan, Garfield left no doubt. All during his stay in Washington, Garfield was extremely critical of McClellan. His writings during this time reflect an almost obsessive focus upon the general. His focus upon McClellan actually began even before he arrived in the capital.

On September 12, 1862, Garfield wrote his close friend, Burke Hinsdale, that he had received orders from the Secretary of War to report to Washington, D.C. as soon as possible. Garfield hoped to be assigned to a field command, although he was unsure of what was in store for him. His friend, Governor William Dennison, felt that Garfield would be given command of a division on the Potomac. If so, Garfield felt that if he was to be under the command of General McClellan "may the gods deliver me." Garfield expressed a dislike for the inactivity of the army under

McClellan, and felt that it had led to a "fearful state of discouragement and demoralization."²

In late September, Garfield was in poor spirits when he confided to his friend Harry Rhodes that he was "inclined to believe that it will be my fate to be put under some West Pointer and command only a brigade." His melancholy was enhanced further by the fact that McClellan did not pursue the enemy after the recent campaign in Maryland, thereby letting them cross the river to safety. He was quite adamant when he wrote that

it confirms my opinion of his utter want of audacity and vigor. There is great bitterness here in regard to him. If this nation dies, it will die in consequence of the timidity of its rulers.³

Several days later Garfield again wrote to Rhodes with news of a possible assignment. Garfield spoke of a proposed expedition to Florida that he would command. Although he expressed an interest in the proposal, he wished that a command in the Grand Army would be offered. That is, "if McClellan were not at his head."⁴

The longer his stay in Washington, the more alarmed Garfield became over the fact that McClellan still retained

²Frederick D. Williams, ed., The Wild Life of the Army: Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), 134.

³Ibid., 139.

⁴Ibid., 142.

his command. In particular, he was disturbed by the dismissal from the service of Major John J. Key due to a comment Key made critical over the lack of Union Army activity after the Battle of Antietam. Key had stated that the game was not to capture the Confederate Army; rather it was to prolong the war until both sides were exhausted. Then the country could be reunited and slavery preserved. Garfield wrote to his wife "From all I can see, I am almost convinced that McClellan is not misrepresented in that statement."⁵

After President Lincoln met with General McClellan in early October, Garfield wrote to Harry Rhodes of the return of the President to the capital and expressed the hope that "God grant he has come to the conclusion to remove him."⁶

Later in October, Garfield again wrote to Rhodes expressing his dissatisfaction with McClellan. At this time he stated that he had confirmed all of his former opinions of McClellan; he condemned him for the recent campaign in Maryland, his constant lack of inactivity with superior forces at his command, and believed that what Major Key had expressed was quite accurate.

Needless to say, when Lincoln eventually removed McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac,

⁵Ibid., 147.

⁶Ibid., 153.

Garfield was quite pleased. Writing to Harry Rhodes, Garfield stated that "God be praised that his act of justice to the army and the country, so long delayed, has been consummated at last." Garfield felt that this removal was better for the country "than a decisive victory over the enemy." He also stated that McClellan's removal could be considered a victory over the "rebels" at home. Because McClellan had been removed from command, Garfield felt that the country was in better shape for the future than at any time since his arrival in the capital.⁷

Garfield's Relationship with Salmon P. Chase

When General Garfield arrived in Washington, D.C., in September of 1862, the opinions of certain members of the Administration toward General McClellan had been made quite clear. The Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, could certainly be considered one of the leaders of the anti-McClellan faction. It is then quite inconceivable that the dislike Chase felt for McClellan was not an influence upon Garfield, especially due to the fact that Garfield was a house guest of Chase and his daughter from the 27th of September to the 16th of November, 1862. This period of time coincided with the pressure being applied to McClellan by various factions in the capital. In fact, Garfield was a

⁷Ibid., 176.

guest of Chase until several days after the dismissal of McClellan.

General Garfield was a dinner guest of Secretary Chase on his first night in the capital. Garfield was immediately impressed by Chase and wrote to his wife that "Chase stood firmly for the vigorous prosecution of the war for freedom's and the Union's sake."⁸

Chase was immediately impressed by Garfield, the result being the invitation to be his house guest during his stay in Washington. This arrangement allowed the men to spend a great deal of time together discussing the current conduct of the war and, in particular, General George McClellan. One day, when Chase and Garfield were enroute to visit with the wounded Union General Joseph Hooker, Garfield listened to a diatribe directed at McClellan. Chase felt that McClellan was not bold enough to become a good soldier and that he "is the curse of our army." Chase was also very critical that President Lincoln had not relieved McClellan of his command. He felt that the conduct of McClellan at the Second Battle of Bull Run should have caused him to be arrested. He stated further that McClellan should have been tried, and if convicted of what Chase felt him to be guilty of, "I would have had him shot."⁹

⁸Ibid., 137.

⁹Ibid., 142.

With his relationship to Chase influencing him, as well as this influence being reflected in his writings, General Garfield eventually became quite adamant that McClellan was detrimental to the Union cause. Given the political climate of the time, it is quite conceivable that by the time of the trial of General Porter, Garfield had not only lost his objectivity toward General McClellan but toward any individuals who would be perceived as being of the same ilk as McClellan. Therefore, being intensely anti-McClellan would make one anti-Porter. If Garfield's statements supporting McClellan and his close relationship to Secretary Chase are not enough to convince one of his bias, then the relationship between Garfield and General Irvin McDowell offers additional evidence.

The McDowell Friendship

At the time of the Porter trial, the military reputation of General Irvin McDowell was also under close scrutiny. McDowell had come under criticism because of his questionable performance during the Second Battle of Bull Run. He asked for, and was granted, a Court of Inquiry in order to clear himself of any wrongdoing. Although the Court of Inquiry found for McDowell, he was never trusted with another combat command and was assigned a command on the West Coast.

Even though General McDowell was himself under investigation at the time, he was called as a witness for the prosecution in the Porter trial and did grave damage to the cause of General Porter. After hearing the initial testimony of McDowell, General Porter, for the first time, began to have serious doubts that the outcome of the trial would be in his favor. Porter told his wife that "McDowell has worked up his evidence to do me the most injury, and has sworn to several things which are deliberately false."¹⁰ There had been no love lost between McDowell, Porter and McClellan since the Peninsular Campaign six months before the trial. McClellan and Porter had not been pleased that McDowell's command had not joined them in the fighting around Richmond. Then General McDowell had, in the several weeks leading up to the Porter trial, developed a close personal relationship with a member of the trial court, General James A. Garfield. The fact remains that this relationship should have, if the details of it had become public at the time, caused General Garfield to disqualify himself from serving on the Porter court.

General Garfield made the acquaintance of General McDowell early in the Fall of 1862. After his initial meeting with him, Garfield found McDowell to be "a very

¹⁰Otto Eisenschiml, The Celebrated Case of Fitz John Porter (New York: The Bobbs Merrill Company, Inc., 1950), 102.

frank and honest man." This was to mark the beginning of a relationship that would result in such a degree of closeness that Garfield would name a son born in 1870 Irvin, after his friend. Subsequent meetings with McDowell would illustrate that Garfield's respect and admiration for McDowell grew quickly.

On October 3, 1862, Garfield wrote to his wife Lucretia that he was scheduled to spend the entire day with McDowell "who will show him a history of the Virginia campaign." Garfield expressed his support for McDowell and believed that he had been greatly wronged. He felt that the President and his cabinet "know he is a true man, but dare not come out before the people and vindicate him."¹¹ The wrong which Garfield alluded to was the question of McDowell's conduct at the Second Battle of Bull Run. It is at this point that Garfield clearly was becoming pro-McDowell. In light of the fact that Porter's conduct at Second Bull Run was to be examined in a manner adversarial to McDowell's, Garfield is placed in a position that logically became anti-Porter.

As General McDowell prepared himself to meet the Court of Inquiry, he met with Garfield. McDowell invited Garfield to look over his personal papers so he would better understand McDowell's position. As a result of this meeting

¹¹Williams, 148.

Garfield praised McDowell as a "competent and reliable source," and clearly stated his opinion of McDowell and his present situation:

I have never believed the absurd stories about McDowell being disloyal, or anything of that sort, but I was not prepared to find a man of such perfect, open, frank, manly sincerity. I believe he is the victim of jealousy, envy, and the most marvelous bad luck--luck that came exceedingly near being splendid success, but failing of that turned sadly the other way.¹²

At this point it is quite apparent that Garfield was very subjective in his opinion of McDowell and it seems rather incredible that a few weeks later he would be asked to sit on a court and judge the testimony of McDowell in a fair and objective manner.

The Hidden Manuscript

Garfield met with McDowell again and as a result of these two lengthy meetings, he recorded his views as they related to current events and individuals discussed. The manuscript of these meetings was sent by Garfield to his wife with the admonition, "be careful that the manuscript does not get into the hand of anyone who will make it public, for the interviews were private and unofficial."¹³

A short time later, Garfield was appointed to serve on the Court of Inquiry investigating General McDowell and

¹²Ibid., 155.

¹³Ibid., 157.

again wrote his wife and expressed his concern that if anyone would bring the document to light, he could be charged "with breaking the faith of the court."¹⁴

Garfield was cognizant that the manuscript definitely reflected a bias on his part toward McDowell and thus he did not want it made public. He rationalized that when he wrote the manuscript "I had at the time not the remotest idea that I should ever have any official connection with the case."¹⁵ Given that this statement is true, Garfield should have realized that he was not in a frame of mind that he could officially deliver an objective opinion of McDowell, and the proper course for Garfield was to disqualify himself from serving on the Porter court. He then directed his wife to preserve the manuscript and to keep it locked out of sight.

An examination of the manuscript itself clearly revealed that Garfield favored individuals opposed to McClellan and his supporters. While deriding McClellan, the document was very favorable toward McClellan's opponents, Generals Pope and McDowell.

Again, Garfield questioned the loyalty of McClellan and he went so far as to claim that General McClellan had made "overtures to [Jefferson] Davis for a command before he was

¹⁴Ibid., 172.

¹⁵Ibid., 173.

appointed to a position in the Union Army."¹⁶ He also felt that McClellan entertained thoughts of becoming the military dictator of the United States. Although these accusations are unfounded, they clearly illustrate the attitude of Garfield toward McClellan at this time.

Toward General Pope, the man who initiated the charges against Porter, Garfield felt that he was "shamefully and treacherously betrayed by General McClellan" at Bull Run and Pope would have been victorious if McClellan had acted properly. Garfield thought that Pope had been greatly wronged and praised his ability and vigor.¹⁷

In the manuscript, Garfield had nothing but praise for General McDowell. He felt that McDowell was a man of great ability who had never been permitted to work on his own plan. He had been thwarted at every turn on the Peninsula, outside of Richmond and on the Rappahanock.

That McDowell had fallen into odium there was no doubt, and Garfield laid the blame squarely at the feet of General McClellan and his friends who "seemed jealous of his [McDowell's] power and omitted no opportunity to disparage him."¹⁸ The fault was everyone's except McDowell's: the people for criticizing his inactivity on the Rappahanock,

¹⁶Ibid., 315.

¹⁷Ibid., 314.

¹⁸Ibid., 313.

General Franz Siegel's dislike because of his subordinate role to McDowell, the dislike by army correspondents because of the cavalier treatment by McDowell and the dislike of his men due to the fact that he was a strict disciplinarian. All-in-all, Garfield did an excellent job of rationalizing away all of the problems surrounding McDowell.

Garfield's personal opinion of McDowell is quite emotional. He praised McDowell as "a man of far more than ordinary ability and culture." He was of the belief that McDowell was a true patriot, and not a politician. He felt no doubt that McDowell was truly a brave man and in a very straightforward manner declared that "I like Irvin McDowell."¹⁹ Nor does Garfield's loss of objectivity end when the Porter trial began, but was reflected in a letter written during the prosecution of the Porter case.

On December 14, 1862, he wrote to Harry Rhodes that McDowell had just testified for almost two full days before the court. Garfield explained that his admiration for McDowell continued to grow. When McDowell testified his "saxon [language] is as clear as crystal and no amount of cross-examination can render him opaque or confused." He also declared that he had "a higher opinion of McDowell's talents than of any other man's in the army, and if he is again assigned a command I would prefer to go under him than

¹⁹Ibid., 314.

any other." Garfield also wrote that McDowell's testimony was "very direct and crushing."²⁰ With his personal bias toward McDowell, how could Garfield state otherwise?

²⁰Ibid., 195.

CONCLUSION

After his conviction and dismissal from the army, Fitz John Porter carried on a crusade to vindicate himself which spanned twenty-three years. Though he was ultimately successful in having the verdict overturned, the fact remains that he was unable to continue his career in a normal manner. One can only suppose what may have come about if General Porter had had this opportunity, just as one may only speculate on how, if he had lived, President Garfield would have reacted toward Porter and his supporters as they sought to clear his name. But a strong case can certainly be made against Garfield because of his prejudice toward Porter during and after the trial. Given the fact that President Garfield would have served at least one, and possibly two terms as President, a closer analysis of his career would certainly have been made by presidential historians. As a result, his involvement in the Porter case would certainly have come under a closer scrutiny than it has to date.

As President, Garfield would most likely have maintained the opinion that the judgment rendered in the Porter case was fair and just. And why not, for it was this same posture he maintained during the post-trial period, when he served in the Congress of the United States. As

President, Garfield would not be disposed to sign any bill overturning the verdict of the Porter court, for it would be an admission that he and the others on the court had erred. While the verdict in the Porter trial can still be debated regarding its overall prejudice and lack of objectivity, the lack of objectivity in the case of one juror cannot. The relationship of the politically-ambitious James A. Garfield to the Radical element persecuting Porter due to his relationship to General McClellan, as well as his lack of objectivity toward the key witness against Porter, should leave no doubt as to partiality and bias on the part of Garfield as he served on the trial court.

When he began his stay in Washington, D.C., General James Garfield had had successes militarily and sought to better his career as a soldier, as well as politically. He wasted no time in his drive to achieve these goals by ingratiating himself with prominent individuals who could assist him.

Already a self-confessed anti-McClellanite, Garfield's attitude toward McClellan was bolstered further when he became the houseguest of the Radical leader, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase. Knowing that he could go far by currying the favor of Chase, it is inconceivable that Garfield would do anything to irritate his host, especially taking a stance counter to the one Chase maintained toward

McClellan and his supporters. But even so, an argument could be made that Garfield is being judged guilty by his association with the anti-McClellan element. Does this association and his own attitude toward McClellan determine that Garfield was then guilty of being anti-Porter and therefore lacking objectivity in the case? It certainly does when the relationship of Garfield to General Irvin McDowell is blended into the matter.

In light of his relationship to the key witness for the prosecution in the Porter case, General Irvin McDowell, there was no excuse for Garfield's not disqualifying himself from serving on the jury judging Porter. Garfield, by his own admission, expressed a close relationship to General McDowell, a relationship so strongly expressed in writing, that he admonished his wife to hide the correspondence lest it be read by others. For if it were read, Garfield knew that his serving on the Porter court under such circumstances would certainly have been judged a serious breach of conduct and trust, a breach of conduct that certainly would have been examined in a more critical light had Garfield been able to serve his complete term as President. But he did not and his indiscretion has been lost in the backwash of history.

There is no way to predict how the trial of General Fitz John Porter would have turned out had General Garfield

disqualified himself from serving on the court. Most likely, Garfield would have been replaced and the verdict would not have changed. But that is irrelevant. What is relevant is the fact that Garfield had lost his objectivity in the matter before the court, and did not take the correct action. If he had, General Porter would have had a fairer trial, and Garfield would have acquitted himself in a manner incumbent upon a man who would later be elected to the highest position of trust in the nation, the presidency of the United States.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

GOVERNMENT PAPERS

U.S. War Department. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 70 vols. Washington, DC: GPO, 1880-1901.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Congressional Globe. U.S. Congress, 37th to 42nd Congresses. Washington, DC, 1863-1873.

Congressional Record. U.S. Congress, 43rd to 49th Congresses. Washington, DC, 1873-1886.

U.S. Congress. House. A Bill for the Relief of Fitz John Porter. H. Rept. 6136, 47th Cong., 1st sess., 1882.

U.S. Congress. Senate. A Bill for the Relief of Fitz John Porter. S. Misc. 1844, 47th Cong., 1st sess., 1882.

U.S. Congress. House. A Bill for the Relief of Fitz John Porter. H. Rept. 67, 49th Cong., 1st sess., 1885.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Case of Major General Fitz John Porter - Original Court Martial for Actions at Manassas, 1862. S. Exdoc 37, 46th Cong., 1st sess., 1878.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Case of Major General Fitz John Porter - Papers of Explanation and Appeal. S. Exdoc. 37, 46th Cong., 1st sess., 1878.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Case of Major General Fitz John Porter - Proceedings of Review Board of Army Officers. S. Exdoc. 37, 46th Cong., 1st sess., 1878.

U.S. Congress. House. Case of Major General Fitz John Porter, Recommendation for Reinstatement in Army, with Minority Report. H. Rept. 129, 46th Cong., 2nd sess., 1879.

- U.S. Congress. Senate. Correspondence Between General J. M. Schofield and Major A. B. Gardner, Board of Officers Inquiring into Case of Fitz-John [sic] Porter. S. Exdoc. 10, 46th Cong., 2nd sess., 1879.
- U.S. Congress. Senate. Relief of Major General Fitz John Porter, with Minority Report. S. Rp. 42, 49th Cong., 1st sess., 1886.
- U.S. Congress. House. Veto Message from President Chester A. Arthur, in the Case of Fitz John Porter. H. Rept. 662, 47th Cong., 1st sess., 1881.

DIARIES-LETTERS-MEMOIRS

- Chase, Salmon P. Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase. Washington, DC: The U.S. Government Printing Office, 1903.
- Chase, Salmon P. Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase. Ed. David Donald. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1954.
- Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, E. Mary L. Hinsdale. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1949.
- Garfield, James A. Diary of James A. Garfield. Eds. Harry James Brown and Frederick D. Williams. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967-1981.
- Garfield, James A. The Wild Life of the Army: Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964.
- Grant, Ulysses Simpson. Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant. Introduced by Phillip Van Doren Stern. Gloucester, MA: P. Smith and Company, 1962.
- McClellan, George C. McClellan's Own Story. George B. McClellan. New York: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1887.

ARTICLES

- "The Fitz John Porter Appeal," Old and New 6 (June 1870): 816.

"Fitz John Porter's Case," The Nation 28 (April 10, 1879): 260-262.

"The Advisory Board and Fitz John Porter's Case," The Nation 34 (June 8, 1882): 476-477.

"The Veto of the Porter Bill," The Nation 39 (July 10, 1884): 276.

NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS

Boston Daily Advertiser, 30 October 1878.

Chicago Tribune, 21 July 1862.

Chicago Tribune, 23 November 1882.

Chicago Tribune, 9 February 1884.

Detroit Free Press, 10 October 1862.

Detroit Advertiser and Tribune, 10 October 1862.

New York Herald, 17 January 1863.

New York Herald, 1 December 1880.

Philadelphia Evening Telegraph, 5 August 1879.

Philadelphia Times, 9 May 1884.

Portsmouth (New Hampshire) Chronicle, 14 August 1905.

BOOKS

Battles and Leaders. New York: The Century Company, 1884.

Bancroft, Frederic. The Life of William H. Seward. 2 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1900.

Bates, Richard O. The Gentleman From Ohio--An Introduction to Garfield. Durham, NC: Moore Publishing Company, 1973.

- Booraem, Hendrik V. The Road to Respectability--James A. Garfield and His World--1844-1852. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1988.
- Brown, E. E. The Life and Public Services of James A. Garfield. Boston: D. L. Guernsey, Cornhill, 1889.
- Burer, Howard B. ed. J. Garfield and C. Arthur. Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1970.
- Caldwell, Robert Granville. James A. Garfield, Party Chieftain. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1931.
- Conwell, Russell H. The Life, Speeches, and Public Services of James A. Garfield. Portland, ME: George Stinson and Company, 1881.
- Eisenschiml, Otto. The Celebrated Case of Fitz John Porter. Indianapolis: The Bobbs Merrill Company, 1950.
- Eisenschiml, Otto. The Hidden Face of the Civil War. Indianapolis: The Bobbs Merrill Company, 1961.
- Flower, Frank Abial. Edwin McMasters Stanton, The Autocrat of Rebellion, Emancipation, and Reconstruction. Akron, OH: The Saaifield Publishing Company, 1905.
- Gorham, George C. Life and Public Services of Edwin M. Stanton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1899.
- Hart, Albert Bushnell. Salmon Portland Chase. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899.
- Hinsdale, B. A. President Garfield. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1895.
- Hunt, Aurora. The Army of the Pacific. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1951.
- Leech, Margaret and Brown, Harry J. The Garfield Orbit. New York: Harper Row, Publishers, 1978.
- Nevins, Allen. The War for the Union. 7 vols. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1947-1971.
- Peskin, Allan. Garfield. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1978.
- Platt, Fletcher. Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War. New York: Norton Company, 1953.

- Rhodes, James Ford. History of the Civil War, 1861-1865. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1917.
- Ridpath, John Clark. The Life and Work of James A. Garfield. Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler and Company, 1895.
- Schofield, John M. Forty-six Years in the Army. New York: The Century Company, 1897.
- Schuckers, Jacob W. The Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874.
- Shannon, Fred Albert. The Organization and Administration of the Union Army: 1861-1865. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1928.
- Snedeker, James. Military Justice Under the Uniform Code. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953.
- Spratt, James L. Military Trial Techniques. Dallas: American Guild Press, 1957.
- Thayer, William Roscoe. The Life and Letters of John Hay. 2 vols. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908.
- Thomas, Benjamin M. and Hyman, Harold M. The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.
- Williams, Harry T. Lincoln and the Radicals. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1941.