

Biography of Jacob Miller Campbell

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HON. JACOB M. CAMPBELL, OF PENNSYLVANIA.

JACOB MILLER CAMPBELL was born in Allegheny Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, November 20, 1821. His father, John Campbell, was a native of Scotland, who came to the United States in 1817; his mother, Mary (Weyand) Campbell, was a native of the above-named town of Somerset. In 1826 his parents removed to Allegheny City, Penn., where he attended the ordinary schools of that day. In 1835 he returned to Somerset, and became an apprentice in the printing-office of the "Somerset Whig," where he remained until he had mastered as much of the printing business as could be acquired in a country printing-office. In 1840 he left Somerset and worked for some time "at the case" in the office of the "Literary Examiner," a monthly magazine of considerable merit, then published in Pittsburgh, Penn. In the fall of the same year he went to New Orleans and worked in the newspaper offices of that city until the spring of 1841, when he engaged in steamboating on the lower Mississippi river and its tributaries; and for several subsequent years filled the position successively of Mate, Clerk, and part owner of a vessel. In the spring of 1847 he married, and in the fall of that year he abandoned steamboating and went to Brady's Bend, Penn., where he engaged in the iron business at the Great Western Iron Works. In 1852 he went to California, but returned in less than a year. In 1853 he moved to Johnstown, Penn., and assisted in the construction of the Mammoth Iron Works of the Cambria Iron Company at that place, with which enterprise he remained connected, holding all the time an important and responsible position, until the breaking out of the war of the rebellion in 1861. Upon the first call of President Lincoln for three months' volunteers to defend the Government, he was enrolled as Lieutenant in the first Company from Cambria County, tendering their services to the Governor, and with it arrived in Harrisburg early on the morning of the 18th of April, 1861, being the first company to enter Camp Curtin.

Upon an organization of Regiments, which was effected during the next two days, his Company was assigned to the third Regiment and designated as Company G, and Lieutenant Campbell was appointed Quartermaster of the Regiment, and with it he served in General Patterson's abortive campaign in the mouth of the Shenandoah Valley, and returning to Harrisburg with the troops of that command, was mustered out on the 28th day of July, 1861. On the 30th of the same month he was commissioned Colonel by Governor Curtin, and authorized to raise a regiment of volunteers for three years. In due time the regiment was recruited, mainly through Colonel Campbell's exertions, and was designated as the 54th Pennsylvania Volunteers. As soon as organized it was ordered to Washington, D. C., in which vicinity it remained until the 29th of March, 1862, when Colonel Campbell was ordered to report with his regiment to General Miles, commanding at Harper's Ferry, Va., and in accordance with instructions from that officer, proceeded to occupy the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, from North Mountain Station, Va., fifty-six miles westward to the South Branch of the Potomac, the Regiment occupying the most important points along the line. In September, 1862, the forces under General Miles were all, except the 54th Pennsylvania Volunteers, driven into Harper's Ferry and captured by Stonewall Jackson. Colonel Campbell reported to General McClellan for duty, and was ordered, with his regiment, to join the forces of General Kelly in the Department of West Virginia. On the 6th of March, 1863, he was ordered to Romney with his Regiment, and there assigned to the command of the Fourth Brigade, First Division, Eighth Army Corps. With this force he proceeded to occupy the different mountain passes in that section, making his headquarters at Mechanicsburg Gap.

While occupying this position they were in almost daily conflict with detachments of the Confederate army and the guerilla forces which infested that section. On the 5th of July his command formed part of the column under General Kelly, which marched to Cherry Run to prevent the force under Lee from gaining possession of the fords at that point on the Potomac, or from coming further west. On the 16th of July he was ordered across the Potomac at Cherry Run with his Brigade, and there he drove the rebels out of Hedgesville, taking possession of that place, skirmishing daily with the enemy as their forces, under Lee, retreated southward. On August 2, 1862, Colonel Campbell, with his Brigade, was ordered to return to his former stations among the Hampshire mountains, where they remained doing active duty until the 6th of November, when he was ordered to Springfield with his command, and all the troops along the line of the railroad from Cherry Run to New Creek, a distance of ninety miles, were

assigned to his command, in addition to his Brigade. On the 4th of January, 1864, he moved with his Brigade to Cumberland, which place was threatened by the forces of Rosser and Fitzhugh Lee. Here he remained until General Sigel took command of the Department of West Virginia.

In April, 1864, in the reorganization of the troops that took place preparatory to the contemplated movement up the valley of the Shenandoah, Colonel Campbell, at his own request, was relieved from the command of his Brigade and returned to his old regiment. At the battle of New Market, May 15, 1864, he occupied the extreme left of the line with his regiment, and it suffered heavily, two hundred and eighty of its number being killed and wounded. After the battle General Sigel fell back to Cedar Creek, where he was relieved of his command by General Hunter, who again renewed the march up the Valley, meeting the enemy at Piedmont on the 5th of June, 1864. In this battle Colonel Campbell, with his Regiment, again occupied the left of the line, flanking the enemy's right and attacking them in the rear, capturing twice as many of the enemy as he had men in his command. For gallant conduct and superior skill exhibited at this battle Colonel Campbell was brevetted a Brigadier-General, a position doubly earned by long and efficient service as a brigade commander. Three days after this battle, when the forces under Crook joined those of Hunter at Staunton, Va., General Campbell was transferred to the command of a brigade in Crook's Division, and as a special favor the 54th Regiment was transferred to the same Brigade, that it might remain under its old commander.

In all the engagements under General Hunter while on his celebrated "Lynchburg raid," General Campbell took a prominent part, and on the return from that place covered the retreat. On July 24, 1864, he took part in the battle of Winchester under Crook, and upon the fall of General Mulligan in that battle, assumed command of his division, and participated in all the subsequent battles of Crook while he was in command, and after Sheridan came to the head of the Department he took part in all the engagements in the Shenandoah Valley under that renowned chieftain.

General Campbell was never absent from his command but three weeks, which occurred in February, 1864, when he was detailed by the Secretary of War, to act as a member of a Court of Inquiry, at Wheeling, Va. He was, with but one single exception, with his comrades in every fight of his brigade or regiment from the time of its organization until finally mustered out of the service.

After the close of the war, on the 17th of August, 1865, General Campbell was nominated by the Republican State Convention of Pennsylvania as a candidate for the office of Surveyor-General (since called Secretary of Internal Affairs), and elected for a term of three years. In 1868 he was again elected to the same office for a second term, and served with great satisfaction to the people and credit to himself. He declined a nomination for a third term, and devoted his time to mechanical and other industrial pursuits until the fall of 1876, when he received the Republican nomination for Congress from the 17th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, composed of the counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, and Somerset, and was elected by a majority of 520 votes over the Hon. John Reilly, Democrat, who had carried the district two years before by a majority of 1,147 votes. In 1878 he was a candidate for reelection, but owing to the organization of the Greenback party in the district, whose principles he strongly antagonized, he was defeated by a majority of 305 votes. In 1880 he was again a candidate, and elected by a majority of 1,436 votes over his former competitor, Hon. A. H. Coffroth.

In 1856 he was a delegate to the first Republican National Convention, assisted in the organization of that party, and has ever since been an earnest advocate of its principles and supporter of its candidates. When in Congress he was an earnest advocate of the resumption of specie payments by the government, and opposed the repeal of the resumption act. He was opposed to the "Silver Bill," maintaining that 412-1/2 grains of silver was not worth one dollar in the markets of the world, and that therefore the silver dollar was a cheat and a fraud. He advocated and voted for the repeal of the Bankrupt Law, believing that its repeal was essential to the restoration of financial and commercial confidence and prosperity. He voted for the restriction of Chinese immigration to this country. He is in favor of a Protective tariff, and voted against the Wood tariff bill because it did not protect and foster our national industries. He favored all measures looking to the enlargement of our foreign commerce, and reform in our civil service.

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