

ANSWER OF COLONEL FORREST TO INTERROGATIONS  
PROPOUNDED BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONFEDER-  
ATE CONGRESS, CHARGED WITH THE DUTY OF EN-  
QUIRING INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE QUAR-  
TERMASTER AND COMMISSARY DEPARTMENT, ABOUT  
THE TIME OF THE SURRENDER OF THE CITY OF  
NASHVILLE.

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*Interrogatory 1st.*—I was not at the city of Nashville, at the time of its surrender, but was there at the time the enemy made their entrance into that part of the city known as Edgefield, having left Fort Donelson, with my command, on the morning of its surrender, and reached Nashville, on Tuesday, February the 18th, about 10 o'clock, A. M. I remained in the city up to the Sunday evening following.

*Interrogatory 2d.*—It would be impossible to state from the data before me, the value of the stores, either in the Quartermaster or Commissary Departments. Having no papers then, nor any previous knowledge of the stores. The stores in the quartermaster's department, consisted of all stores necessary to the department—clothing especially, in large amounts, shoes, harness, etc., with considerable unmanufactured material. The commissary stores, were: meat, flour, sugar, molasses, and coffee. There was a very large amount of meat in store, and on the landing at my arrival, though large amounts had already been carried away by citizens.

*Interrogatory 3d.*—A portion of these stores had been removed before the surrender. A considerable amount of meat on the landing, I was informed, was thrown into the river on Sunday, *before my arrival*, and carried off by the citizens. The doors of the commissary depot were thrown open, and the citizens in dense crowds, were packing and hauling off the balance, at the time of my arrival, on Tuesday. The quartermasters' stores, were also open, and the citizens were invited to come and help themselves, which they did in larger crowds, if possible, than at the other department.

*Interrogatories 4th and 5th.*—On Tuesday morning, I was ordered by General Floyd, to take command of the city, and attempted to drive

the mob from the doors of the departments, which mob was composed of straggling soldiers and citizens of all grades. The mob had taken possession of the city to that extent, that every species of property was unsafe. Houses were closed, carriages and wagons were concealed to prevent the mob from taking possession of them. Houses were being seized everywhere. I had to call out my cavalry, and after every other means failed, charge the mob, before I could get it so dispersed as to get wagons to the doors of the departments, to load up the stores for transportation. After the mob was partially dispersed and quiet restored, a number of citizens furnished wagons and assisted in loading them. I was busily engaged in this work on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I transported 700 large boxes of clothing to the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad depot, several hundred bales osnaburgs and other military goods from the quartermaster's department, most, if not all the shoes having been seized by the mob. I removed about 700 or 800 wagon loads of meat. The high water having destroyed the bridges so as to stop the transportation over the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad, I had large amounts of this meat taken over the Tennessee and Alabama railroad. By examination on Sunday morning, I found a large amount of fixed ammunition, in the shape of cartridges, and ammunition for light artillery, in the magazine, which, with the assistance of General Harding, I conveyed over seven miles on the Tennessee and Alabama railroad, in wagons, to the amount of 30 odd wagon loads, after the enemy had reached the river. A portion was sent on to Murfreesboro' in wagons. The quartermaster stores which had not already fallen into the hands of the mob, were all removed, save a lot of rope, loose shoes, and a large number of tents. The mob had already possessed themselves of a large amount of these stores. A large quantity of meat was left in store, and on the river bank, and some at the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad depot, on account of the break in the railroad. I cannot estimate the amount, as several store houses had not been opened up to the time of my leaving. All stores left, fell into the hands of the enemy, except forty pieces of light artillery, which were burned and spiked by order of General Floyd, as were the guns at Fort Zollicoffer. My proposition to remove these stores, made by telegraph, to Murfreesboro', had the sanction of General A. S. Johnston.

*Interrogatory 6th.*—No effort was made, save by the mob, who were endeavoring to possess themselves of these stores, to prevent their removal, and a very large amount was taken off before I was placed in command of the city.

*Interrogatory 7th.*—It was (eight days) from the time the quartermaster left the city, before the arrival of the enemy—commissaries and other persons connected with these departments, leaving at the same time. With proper diligence on their part, I have no doubt all the public stores might have been transported to places of safety.

*Interrogatory 8th.*—Up to Saturday, the railroads were open, and might have been used to transport these stores. Saturday the bridges of the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad gave way. Besides these modes of conveyance, a large number of wagons might have been

obtained, had the quiet and order of the city been maintained, and large additional amounts of stores might, by these means, have been transported to places of safety.

*Interrogatories 9th and 10th.*—I saw no officer connected with the quartermaster or commissary departments, except Mr. Patton, who left on Friday. I did not, at any time, meet, or hear of Major J. K. Stevenson in the city during my stay there.

*Interrogatories 11th, 12th and 13th.*—From my personal knowledge, I can say nothing of the manner in which Major Stevenson left the city. Common rumor, and many reliable citizens informed me, that Major Stevenson left by a special train, Sunday evening, February the 16th, taking personal baggage, furniture, carriage, and carriage horses; the train ordered by himself, as President of the railroad.

*Interrogatory 14th.*—All the means of transportation were actually necessary for the transportation of Government stores, of sick and wounded soldiers—many of whom, fell into the hands of the enemy for want of it, and who might have been saved by the proper use of the means at hand. The necessity for these means of transportation for stores, will be seen by the above answers which I have given. I have been compelled to be as brief as possible, in making the above answers, my whole time being engaged, as we seem to be upon the eve of another great battle. The city was in a much worse condition than I can convey an idea of, on paper, and the loss of public stores must be estimated by millions of dollars. The panic was entirely useless, and not at all justified by the circumstances. General Harding and the Mayor of the city, with Mr. Williams, deserve special mention for assistance rendered in removing the public property. In my judgment, if the quartermaster and commissary had remained at their post, and worked diligently, with the means at their command, the Government stores might all have been saved between the time of the fall of Fort Donelson, and the arrival of the enemy in Nashville.

Respectfully submitted by

A. B. FORREST,

*Colonel commanding Forrest's Brigade Cavalry.*