

REPORT OF MARSHAL KANE TO THE BOARD
OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS.

*An Official Narrative of the Facts in Relation to the
Occurrences which took place in this City
on Friday, April 19, 1861.*

POLICE DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE MARSHAL,

Baltimore, May 3, 1861.

Chas. Howard, Esq.,

President of the Board of Police:

SIR:—The columns of the Baltimore *American* of this date contain an assault upon my official conduct as commanding officer of the police force of this city, in connection with the occurrences of the 19th of April last, which seems to require some notice, in order that the facts of the case may be duly registered on the journals of your office.

With that view I have the honor to invite your attention to the fact that on the forenoon of Thursday, the 18th of April, I was directed by the Police Board to furnish escort to two bodies of federal troops which were expected on that day by the Northern Central road, at 1 o'clock, and by the Wilmington and Philadelphia road at 4 o'clock, respectively, and to see that they were passed safely through our city. Subsequently on the same day, information was communicated to me that the Philadelphia company, fearing that the passage of those troops would create excitement, were maturing arrangements to pass them across our harbor from Canton to Locust Point thus avoiding the streets of our city. It will be seen, however, that this arrangement was not consummated.

At one o'clock, A. M., I was on the ground at the outer depot of the Northern Central Road, and took command of the force which had been detailed to that point. I was accompanied to the depot by his Honor Mayor Brown, who seemed deeply anxious that our laws should be respected and enforced. The Mayor, however, was called away by message from the Governor to meet in consultation at the moment when the train arrived. It is enough to say, however, that the troops were safely escorted to Mount Clare depot and departed for Washington, having experienced no more annoyance than might have been expected, as doubtless the officers of the regular troops, who accompanied the detachment, will readily testify.

My force was kept under arms until a late hour, waiting the arrival of the detachment expected from Philadelphia, but it was finally ascertained from the railroad agent that the troops had not even started, nor did they know when they would start from Philadelphia, when the police force was dismissed, with orders to remain ready for instant call. I heard nothing more of these troops until twenty minutes past eight o'clock on the next (Friday) morning, April 19th, at which time I was met on the street by one of my men with a dispatch from the Southern police station, signed by Mr. Commissioner Davis, informing me that the troops from Philadelphia would arrive at the Camden street (Washington) Depot within thirty minutes; that the cars containing them would not stop at the Philadelphia depot, but go directly to the Washington depot, *to which place I was requested, by the railroad authorities, to send a police force.*

I at once telegraphed to the several stations and within the thirty minutes I was on the ground at the Camden station with an ample force, but was then told that the troops were just crossing the Susquehanna river, and would not arrive for some time.

With the view to keep down the excitement I sent the police force from the depot to a neighboring police station to await the trains coming, and also sent for his Honor, the Mayor, who soon appeared, accompanied by the Board of Police.

The cars arrived, and very soon an immense throng of people were congregated, but by the firmness of the police the troops were all shifted from the Philadelphia to the Washington cars without any collision with our people having occurred, and the excitement partially subsided. After waiting some considerable time for the train to start, and not being made aware that any more Philadelphia cars were expected, I inquired of some of the railroad agents present the cause of the delay, and was informed that obstructions had been placed on the Washington track in advance of the train. I at once sent a detachment of police under determined and reliable officers to guard the track outside of the city, and to see that the trains were protected to the Relay House (a distance of nine miles) if necessary.

After waiting a long additional time, and having made repeated inquiries as to the cause of the continued delay in starting the train, I was for the first time informed that other troops were expected at that station; and at, the same moment learned that a riot had commenced in Pratt street.

I promptly devolved the command at the Camden station upon Deputy Marshal Gifford, and started for the scene of riot with a detachment of my men, and met the Massachusetts soldiery on Pratt street near Light street, (his Honor Mayor Brown being with them,) hastening towards the Washington depot, pursued by an enraged multitude. I opened my ranks, through which they passed, and closed in their rear; formed my men across the street; directed them to draw their revolvers and to shoot down any man who dared to break their line. It is enough for me to say that these orders were faithfully executed; my men did their duty, and the Massachusetts troops were rescued.

From that time the missiles intended for the troops were encountered by your own police force. The tumult being thus subdued, no attack being subsequently made upon the military, I marched my men back to the Camden station, saw the train safely depart for Washington; learned from the railroad officers that the troops had all departed, and that the services of my command were no longer required. I dismissed the detachment to their several stations, except those of the Second district, which I ordered to be posted for the protection of parties on Baltimore street, against whom there seemed to be an intense excitement; the editors of the *American* and *Clipper* being regarded as particularly obnoxious and loudly threatened.

On the way to my office I learned from Mr. Richard Norris, Jr., that there were other troops at the Philadelphia depot, and accompanied by that gentleman I hurried in a carriage to that place, and there found several car-loads of troops, mostly, if not all, without uniforms. Some of these troops commenced jumping from the train just as I got there, and were immediately set upon by an infuriated populace. I fought hard for their protection; at first almost alone, but soon had the assistance of a part of my force, who hurried from the neighboring beats, and had the gratification of seeing all but those who took shelter in neighboring houses, put on another train, and under escort of police, accompanied by myself, sent safely out of the city on their return to Philadelphia. The earnest expressions of gratitude which I received from the persons thus rescued, left on my mind the conviction that I had done my duty.

On this occasion I was ably assisted by Deputy Marshal Gifford and by some noble-hearted and fearless citizens, but feel bound to say that I did not recognize as thus engaged one single individual of those now actively employed in defaming the city and its authorities.

It may be proper to state, that up to this time I did not know anything of the origin of the rencontre, nor the extent of the killed and wounded, but only know that our whole city seemed filled with horror at the knowledge that peaceful and respected citizens had been shot on our public streets.

From this time till a late hour of the night my office was beset by those anxious to ascertain the truth of rumors that a renewal of the difficulties was likely to occur. Near midnight I received from Wm. Prescott Smith, Esq., the Master of Transportation of the Washington and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, information that he had received a dispatch from President Thompson, of the Pennsylvania road, "that it was impossible to prevent these troops from going through Baltimore; the Union men must be aroused to resist the mob."

I felt it my duty to communicate this information to his Honor, Mayor Brown, and went to his house for that purpose, and made the statement to him. He deemed it all important to confer with his Excellency, Governor Hicks, and visited him in his chamber.

The Governor then sent for me, and in company with the Mayor I went to his chamber, and the condition of the city, the dangers of a sanguinary conflict in the event of troops coming to it whilst the public mind was highly inflamed, being fully discussed, the Governor deemed it proper, and agreed with Mayor Brown and myself that the bridges on the roads by which troops would likely come, should be destroyed, as the only means of impeding them and avoiding the threatened conflict, and the Mayor and Board of Police then issued the order to that effect.

It was in the midst of this excitement, whilst our entire community was laboring under the most in tense apprehension; the volunteers, militia, and large numbers of our citizens being under arms, under the apprehension of a collision, and with the knowledge that the great mass of our citizens looked to myself as the immediate commanding officer (under the Board) of Armed Police for the best protection, which, under such circumstances, could be afforded, in reply to a despatch from Bradley Johnson, Esq.,—now, or lately the State's Attorney for Frederick county—offering the services of a body of patriotic citizens of that gallant county, who, true to the instinct of every son of Maryland, were ready to come, as did their sires in 1814, to defend the homes of their friends in Baltimore. I used the language of the despatch which is made the pretext for the disgraceful and libelous assault referred to.

What the condition of Baltimore city would be at this time had I failed to execute the order to destroy the bridges referred to, by which the troops were arrested at Cockeysville on the morning of Sunday, the 21st of April, instead of coming to the city, is too horrible to contemplate, and can better be imagined than described.

The strictures in regard to the action of the police in removing flags which were being raised, as it is well known, not from any patriotic motives, but for the sole purpose of exciting riot and disorder, are too absurd to require extended notice.

I have the conviction that I have faithfully discharged the duties of the office of Marshal of Police during the extraordinary excitement which has pervaded this community, probably beyond anything of the kind in its previous history, and that the force under my command has been successful in protecting the persons and property of people of the most in tensely obnoxious character to another portion of our community from the slightest violence or injury. I feel that I can well afford to endure assaults, coming from such sources.

It may be proper in this connection to refer to the insinuation so broadly conveyed of complicity on the part of the police in appropriating property of the Federal Government to improper uses. The charge is untrue. It was taken into the custody of the police solely for the purpose of preserving it—of which proper notice was given to the authorities of the United States Government, in Washington and in this city.

Yours, very respectfully,

GEO. P. KANE, *Marshal.*