

SPEECH OF GENERAL JOHN O'NEILL,

*At his Trial at Windsor, July 30, 1870.*

MAY it please your Honors, I feel that I occupy a very awkward position as a man who loves and reveres the laws of the land—as a man who has fought and bled to preserve those laws—I cannot but feel the awkwardness of my position in standing before this Court charged with the crime of violating those laws. As a soldier of the American Republic, I served, as the record will show, honestly and faithfully. Before the breaking out of the late unfortunate war, I was a soldier in the regular army. I enlisted in 1857, and successively served as a private, as a corporal, as a sergeant, as a sergeant-major, brevet second lieutenant, first lieutenant, and captain; and resigned after having been recommended for the position of Colonel on account of services rendered by me in the cause of my country, and in defence of her laws. I did not feel justified in remaining in the army, because I had been disqualified for active service in the field, having been severely wounded during the siege of Knoxville, in the latter part of 1863.

With your kind permission I will read one or two short letters received from gentlemen distinguished in the army. I have a number of such letters, but have only two or three with me. The first is from Major-General Stoneman, dated Headquarters 23d Army Corps, March 8th, 1864:

I knew Lieut. O'Neill well on the Peninsula, and as a brave and worthy officer, in whose judgment and capacity I had the greatest confidence. I hope he will receive the promotion to which his merits entitle him, that of a field officer in a colored regiment.

GEORGE STONEMAN, Maj. Gen. Commanding Corps.

I beg leave to remark that after being wounded I was placed on a military examining board at Nashville, Tenn. While there I felt that I would like to have command of a colored cavalry regiment, and made application for such a command, hence the letter of Gen. Stoneman.

The next is from Gen. Judah, dated Headquarters 2d Division, 23d Army Corps, in camp near Mossy Creek, Tenn., March 7th, 1864:

It gives me pleasure to state that, from personal observation, I deem Lieut. John O'Neill, of the 5th Indiana Cavalry, one of the most gallant and efficient officers it has been my duty to command. His daring and services have been conspicuous, and I trust he may receive what he has so ably merited—his promotion.

H. M. JUDAH, Brig. Gen. Com. Div.

The following indorsement appears on a resignation which I tendered whilst first Lieutenant of the Indiana Cavalry. This resignation I tendered because I