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SC-11848b: Colonel Marcus M. Spiegel Collection, 1861-1908.

“A Voice from the Grave” by Simon Wolf, 1908 August 10.

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American Jewish Archives website.

A Voice from the Grave

Simon Wolf Submits Letter Written by Colonel Spiegel

Patriotism of the Jew

WASHINGTON, D. C., August 10th, 1908.
To the Editor B'nai B'rith News.

In looking over my papers I found among others, a letter from Marcus M. Spiegel, who at the time of the writing of the letter was colonel of the 120th Ohio Volunteers, and who in the campaign about which he speaks to be at hand, lost his life, a martyr to the Union cause. The letter speaks for itself, full of that enthusiasm and fearlessness which characterize the man and the soldier; and when he says, "The next time, we will take Vicksburg," he prophesied accurately, for three months after, the Stars and Stripes did float over the battlements of Vicksburg.

I deem it a great legacy to transmit to future generations the feelings that actuated an American citizen of Jewish faith, who left his dear ones at the call of his country, and died in defense of it. Many of the relatives of Col. Spiegel, notably (of them) his brother Joseph, resides in Chicago, and will no doubt be pleased to hear this voice from the grave.

The Order of B'nai B'rith, which stands for all that means patriotism, can do no better work than to endorse the lofty and loyal sentiments of the writer. And the young men in American Israel ought to be stimulated to the highest degree by knowing that one of their own co-religionists is inscribed on the deathless roll of fame, in aid of the preservation and perpetuation of American institutions.

Very sincerely,
 SIMON WOLF.

Headquarters 120th O. V. S., Camp
 McClemand, Millikens Bend.
 March 20, 1863.

My Dear Cousin Simon:

I have just returned from a very pleasant battalion drill in which I put my regiment through the different evolutions of the field and having opened my tent in order to give the wind an opportunity to cool my little home and make the oppressive heat more congenial, I conclude to do what I should have done long ago, write to one of my best friends.

A week ago I received a letter from our mutual friend, Moses, with your address. Since that time I have been wanting to write daily.

You see I am still a soldier and I must say I like my profession. If it were not for my dear little family I should not ask for a nicer or more agreeable situation; and why not? My colonel has resigned a month, and for more than two months prior to his resignation he was unable, from sickness, to command the regiment,

which placed me in the command of nearly 900, as good a set of men as ever lived, whose very life and cares are freely given to please and obey me. This may seem like boasting, but you know me and I can talk plain to you.

Having the confidence and love of my officers and men and the respect and good will of my superior officers, and being engaged in the noble cause of saving the glorious land of my adoption from the vile aspirations of traitors and worse than that; and holding an honorable position, what more my dear friend, could I desire? Is there a prouder legacy that I might leave my children, than having been a faithful soldier in the army of the Union. Yet I wish this war were over, and I could retire to my beloved family and quiet home, but at the same time much as I desire this, I do not want the war to close until the supremacy of our good government is fully established, the Union preserved, and the rebels made to acknowledge that we have a noble and magnificent government to live under in peace, but too powerful to rebel against; neither do I want to hear of peace until those who have so maliciously attacked the Stars and Stripes, first declare their willingness to retrace their steps, lay down their arms, acknowledge the supremacy of the government.

You know undoubtedly that my regiment was both in the battle of Vicksburg, and at Arkansas Post, and acquitted itself with honor in either, in the latter we are highly complimented by Gen. McClemand by making the charge on the Fort, and first planting the Stars and Stripes on the rebel battlement.

The officers of the regiment have forwarded a petition to the Governor of Ohio, to have me promoted Colonel, which was endorsed in the most complimentary terms by Brig. Gen. Van Dever and Osterhouse, and by Maj. Gen. McClemand, which, if you ever come to Columbus, I want you to see. I know it will do you good, it is not every day officers get such recommendations. We expect active operations soon, we are now ordered to keep ourselves in readiness to march at a moments notice, I think it means up to Yazoo. The health and spirit of the troops are daily improving, they begin to show signs of eagerness for another chance at old Vicksburg, the next time we will take it.

Very sincerely,
 M. M. SPIEGEL,
 Lt. Col. 120th Ohio.

9th Div. 18th Army Corps, Dept. of Tenn.,
 before Vicksburg.

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