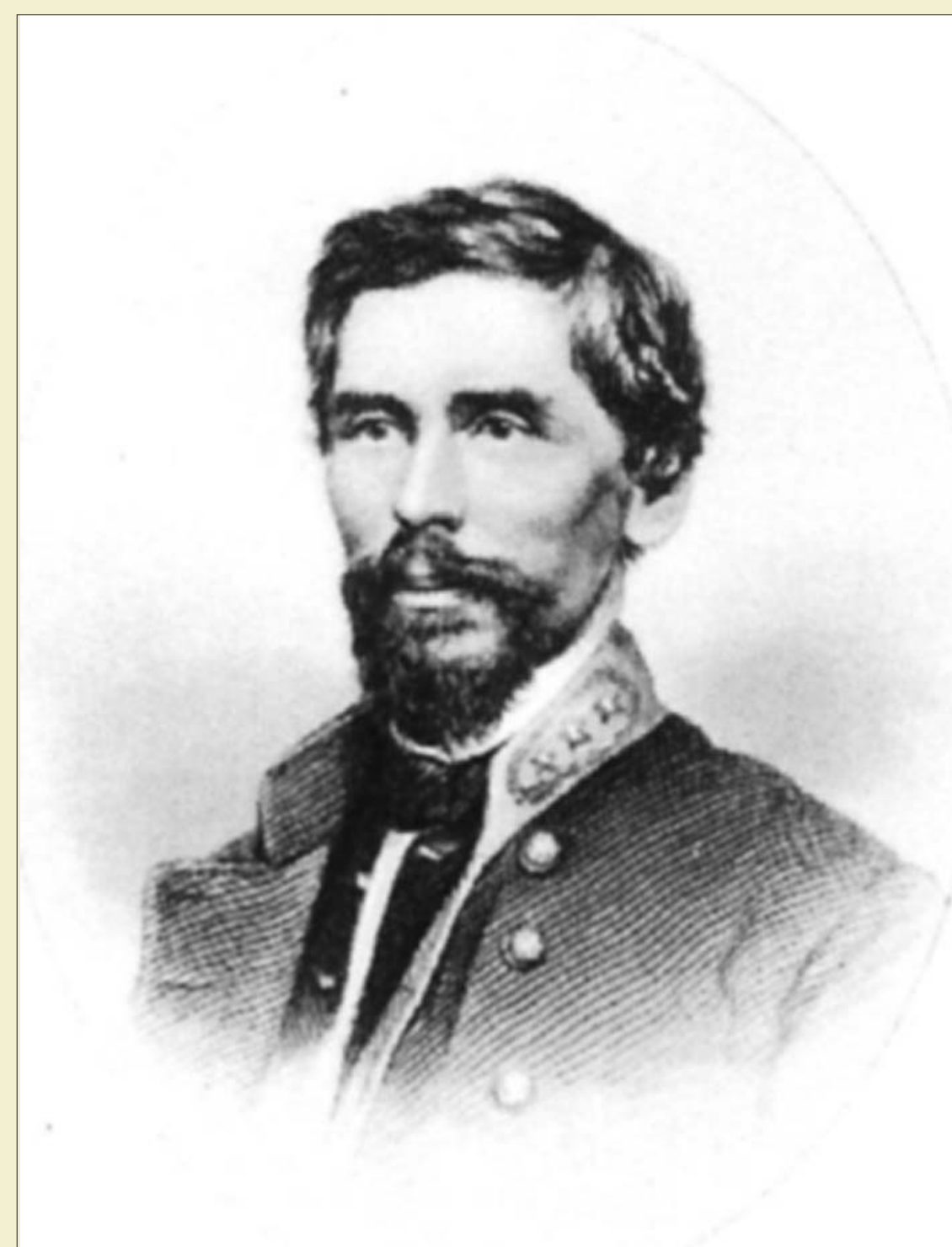


CONFEDERATE GENERAL PATRICK CLEBURNE'S EMANCIPATION PROPOSAL

Presented To The High Command - Army of Tennessee, January 2, 1864

"As between the loss of independence and the loss of slavery, we assume that every patriot will freely give up the latter -- give up the Negro slave rather than be a slave himself."

So wrote Irish born Confederate Maj. Gen. Patrick R. Cleburne following his celebrated victory at Ringgold Gap, Georgia. Cleburne took the opportunity of the attention it garnered to propose an idea which he had considered for months. The Proposal to Enlist Slaves and Guarantee Freedom to All Loyal Negroes was the result of his realisation that a valuable resource was not being tapped. He cited that throughout history, slaves had fought beside masters in many conflicts, and that the North was only using the slavery issue



MAJOR GENERAL PATRICK CLEBURNE

as "merely a pretense to establish sectional superiority and a more centralized form of government." Remove slavery as a war factor and the foundations of the North's argument would crumble. Cleburne also knew that Great Britain and France would likely recognize the South as a sovereign nation once it emancipated its own slaves.

While on leave in late 1863 to Alabama, he canvassed various planters on whether they would release their slaves for military service. The agreement was unanimous. Based on this support, he wrote the treatise and prepared to take it to his commanders.

His paper was presented to the Confederate High Command of the Army of Tennessee in Dalton, Georgia on January 2, 1864 in an emotional address. He beseeched his peers to consider the fate of the South should she lose the war:

"Every man should endeavor to understand the meaning of subjugation

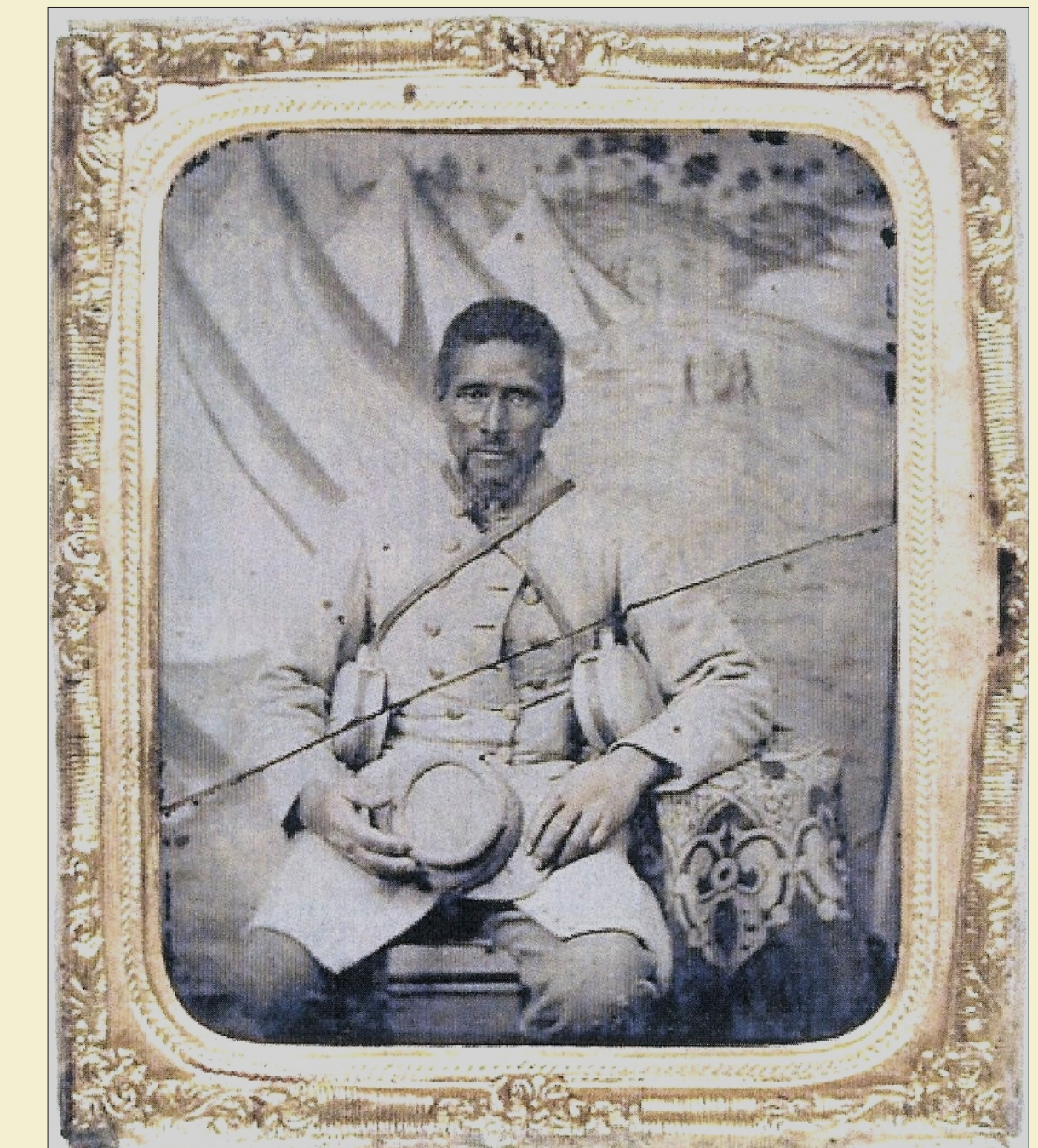
before it is too late. We can give but a faint idea when we say it means the loss of all we now hold most sacred -- slaves and all other personal property, lands, homesteads, liberty, justice, safety, pride, manhood. It means that the history of this heroic struggle will be written by the enemy; that our youth will be trained by Northern school teachers; will learn from Northern school books their version of the war; will be impressed by all the influences of history and education to regard our gallant dead as traitors, our maimed veterans as fit objects for derision."



CLEBURNE MONUMENT AT RINGGOLD GAP

The document bore the signatures of all thirteen brigadier generals, colonels and majors serving in Cleburne's Division. However, the reaction to this far-thinking intellectual address was mixed among the other corps commanders of Joe Johnston's army. When one detractor, Gen. W.H.T. Walker demanded that the idea was treasonous and wanted to poll all the officers present, they became intimidated. There was no immediate support for Cleburne's offer to

train a division of slaves to serve in the Confederate army in exchange for freedom, though the idea had no treasonous intentions.



MARLBORO JONES (BLACK CONFEDERATE) 40th GEORGIA REGIMENT

Eventually this idea reached a vote in the Confederate Congress and passed March 13, 1865. The overall responsibility of organizing these Colored Troops was given to General-in-Chief Robert E. Lee with the stipulation that "no slave will be accepted as a recruit unless with his own consent and with the approbation of his master by a written instrument conferring, as far as he may, the rights of a freedman."

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