



COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

Our Constitution—guard it ever! Our glorious Union—hold it dear! Our Harry Flag—forever it never! The proud Caucasian—our only peer!

BLOOMSBURG: Saturday Morning, Apr. 15, 1865.

TERMS OF THIS PAPER: \$3 00 per Year, or 2 50 if paid strictly in advance.

The Columbia Co. Invasion.

Claim of Joseph Coleman.

Correspondence and Papers.

Joseph Coleman to General Couch. To Major General D. N. Couch, Commanding Department.

The undersigned, a citizen of Columbia County, respectfully represents:—That the troops recently sent to this county were encamped for about four weeks upon his land in the township of Fishingcreek, establishing there a camp named Camp Hancock, and that in addition to their use of his real estate (including a part of his house) they used and consumed, without permission, various articles of personal property. That no compensation has been made for such use of his property or for injuries thereto. That he has applied within a few days to Quartermaster Wood, and also to Capt. John P. Short, at Orangeville, who declined acting in the case, the former for alleged want of authority, and the latter because (as he said) the causes of claim (beside the occupancy of land) did not arise while he held actual command at Camp Hancock. But the other chief officers who held command there, are believed to be removed from the county.

The undersigned appends hereto a statement of property used or appropriated by the troops, and he now applies for some appropriate order of appraisal or valuation in his case and for the payment to him of such sum as may be found to be justly his due. All of which is respectfully submitted.

JOSEPH COLEMAN.

October 29, 1864.

Statement of Items.

Use of six acres of enclosed land for four weeks for encampment.

Use of a field of seven acres of grass land, same time, for drill.

Use of a third field of four acres of grass land, part of same time, for same purpose.

Use of barn and stable four weeks.

Use of three main rooms of dwelling house and two beds, same time, by Colonel, Quartermaster, &c.

One American Flag loaned to troops for use and carried off by them. Value, \$10.

276 sawed fence rails used.

29 young sugar maple trees used or consumed.

Straw of one thousand sheaves of wheat.

One ton of hay in barn.

10 bushels of potatoes in field.

20 bushels corn in the ear from field.

20 bushels apples and peaches.

Two acres of buckwheat in the ground lost by destruction of fences.

150 sugar troughs and three large sap troughs used and destroyed.

300 feet poplar and linden boards from sawmill.

400 loads of slabs taken from saw mill.

One rifle, value \$15,—taken from house of Charles Coleman.

Axe, foot-ads and crowbar taken.

One shoat, five months old, taken and killed.

A quantity of fowls and three turkeys.

Some boards torn from saw mill.

No occupation of land, or buildings, or taking or use of property, was by consent or upon request made to me or any member of my family.

JOSEPH COLEMAN.

Stillwater, Columbia County, Pa.

Reply.

HEAD QUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE SUSQUEHANNA, Chambersburg, Pa., November 9, 1864.

MR. JOSEPH COLEMAN,

Stillwater P. O.,

Columbia County, Pa.

SIR:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication dated October 29th, 1864, relative to property used and destroyed by the U. S. Forces in Columbia County, and in reply I am directed to transmit herewith for

your information, copy of a report of Capt. W. M. Wood, A. Q. M., and an "Extract" from a Report furnished by Capt. John P. Short, V. R. C. Commanding U. S. Forces in Columbia County, to whom your claim was referred for investigation and report.

I am, Sir, very Respectfully, Your Obedient Servant, JNO. S. SCHULTZ, Assistant Adjutant General.

HEAD QUARTERS, UNITED STATES FORCES, CHAMBERSBURG, Pa., November 9, 1864.

D. N. COUCH,

Maj. Gen'l Com. Dept. Susquehanna,

Chambersburg, Pa.

GENERAL—

Extract.

I am certain during the short period that I was in command at Camp Hancock no property was destroyed belonging to said Joseph Coleman, and further that on application from Hiram Karns, son-in-law of Joseph Coleman, I appointed a board of appraisers composed of the following named residents of Fishing Creek township, farmers and men of good judgment and character, namely:—James Buckalew, Peter Laubach and William Hulme; who after examination of the premises found the damages so slight they deemed, (2) two of them, unnecessary to give report on the same, as they said the amount of manure left on the premises recently occupied by the troops, would more than pay for the damages done.

In reference to quarters used by the Quartermaster and his Clerk at the House of said Coleman, also the stabling for horses, and also the stores alleged to have been appropriated by the command without compensation, I refer you to the statement of W. M. Wood, Captain and A. Q. M., herewith enclosed.

I am, General, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN P. SHORT,

Capt. V. R. C. Com. U. S. Forces in Columbia County, Pa.

True copy, furnished for the information of Mr. Joseph Coleman

JNO. S. SCHULTZ,

Assist. Adjutant General.

Asst. Qr. Mas. Office,

Orangeville, Pa., Nov. 3, 1864.

CAPT. JNO. P. SHORT,

Commanding U. S. Forces

SIR:—In reference to the statement made by Joseph Coleman, in his list of items, I have the honor to state as follows:—

That I and my clerk applied to Mrs. Coleman for board and lodging, which she willingly furnished, and that we paid her for the same.

That an unoccupied stable was used, by permission of Mrs. Coleman, for stabling two horses, and a portion of the time a third horse.

That some white-pine slabs were given to the men to use for floors in their tents by Mrs. Coleman, who remarked that they were of "no account" and "would not be used."

That if any hay or straw was used I know nothing of it, it was not used by me; nor do I know anything of the use of corn, rails, sugar-maple trees, &c.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

W. M. WOOD,

Captain and A. Q. M.

True copy, respectfully furnished for the information of Mr. Joseph Coleman.

JNO. S. SCHULTZ,

Assist. Adj. Gen.

MR. COLEMAN TO GEN. COUCH.

MAJ. GEN. D. N. COUCH,

Com. Dep't. of the Susquehanna.

GENERAL:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a communication from Captain Jno. S. Schultz, Assistant Adjutant General, dated the 9th instant, in reply to my letter to you of October 29th. And I have given particular attention, not only to this communication, but to the statements of Captain Short and Assistant Quartermaster Wood which accompany it and which (as I am told by Captain Schultz) are transmitted to me for my information.

As the explanations of Captain Short and Quartermaster Wood apply to but a part of the items of claim mentioned in my former letter, and as some of those explanations are insufficient upon their face and the remainder erroneous in point of fact, the information conveyed to me by them is far from satisfactory; and I am compelled by a due regard to my own interests and position as a claimant, to expose their imperfections. But in doing this, I shall endeavor to speak with proper decorum, and shall regret the necessity of

troubling you further upon the subject of my claim.

Captain Short says, "that during the short period he was in command at Camp Hancock he is certain no property was destroyed belonging to Joseph Coleman."

To this I answer: 1st. That if strictly accurate, it furnishes no reason for non-payment of damages suffered when he was not in command, which, according to him, was nearly the whole time in question. 2nd. That his remark applies only to destruction of property and not to use and occupation which constitute, mainly, the foundation of the claim. 3rd. But although in its restricted and just application the statement is not very important in its effect upon the case, its accuracy is not admitted. Reference is here made to the concluding part of the affidavit of Mr. Karns, herewith transmitted.

Captain S. does not speak of his own knowledge to the merits of the case, in any other particular than the one just mentioned.

A full and complete answer to the statements of fact made by the Quartermaster is given in the affidavits of Mrs. Coleman and Hiram Karns, now forwarded, and to which attention is respectfully requested. The explanations contained therein are believed to be fair and full upon all the points mentioned by the Quartermaster, and extend beyond them to the general merits of the claim.

Two things are to be considered; that the Quartermaster's statement applies only to a few items of demand, and that upon them he is shown to be mistaken and his statements incomplete.

But one point remains to be mentioned, not because it effects the merits of the case but because it is calculated to create prejudice against the claim it left unnoticed. Captain Short states that he named three persons as appraisers to examine the premises, who having examined them found the damages slight and two of them thought it unnecessary to make report. He adds that they said the manure left on the premises would more than pay the damages done! There might have been some importance attached to this statement while unexplained, if the conclusion had been omitted. But the utter absurdity of the reason assigned for non-assessment of damages, removes all force from an alleged opinion resting upon it. The occupancy of a large quantity of land by a considerable force with destruction of fences and crops; the sweeping off of sugar camp trees with implements and fixtures; the principal use of a dwelling house and of stables; consumption of hay, straw and lumber in material quantities by the troops, and the various other appropriations of property and particular injuries which have been stated—all to be compensated by some refuse litter and horse-droppings of a temporary camp! It is very certain that no intelligent man ever formed such an opinion or ever deliberately and honestly expressed it.

But the truth is, that the appraisers never went through with the examination of my claim; did not have my statement of particulars before them; were never sworn, and never met to form a decision or to make a report in the case. All this is shown by the certificate of William Hulme, one of the appraisers herewith transmitted.

The appraisers were appointed without my knowledge and one of them is personally unfriendly to me. This may account for their failure to proceed, for which I am in no way responsible. I may add that Mr. Peter Laubach, one of them has furnished me a note dated the 19th inst. in which he says that he prefers to have another man appointed in his place to appraise the Camp damages.

I believe I have now gone through with all the points mentioned in the papers sent me, and given to each of them a satisfactory answer. And besides doing this in the affidavits now sent evidence is furnished somewhat in detail to sustain the justice of my demand.

JOSEPH COLEMAN,

Stillwater, Nov. 26, 1865.

Statement of Mrs. Coleman.

On the Saturday when the troops came to encamp on the farm, in September, Capt Wood, Assistant Quartermaster came to the House with Cummings his Clerk. Upon hearing knocking I went to the front door and they came in. He said he wanted a room in the House.— He looked around in several rooms and selected rooms and beds, and directed the things to be taken out. By this time Hiram Karns came and assisted to clear the rooms which was done except a table and clock in one room and a bed and desk in

another. In a third room the furniture and bed were left, the latter being used by the Quartermaster himself. He had possession of the three rooms within one day of four weeks. The Colonel in command of the troops was there at the time the rooms were taken and knew what took place. I was alarmed at the time and did not resist the proceeding, but I did not give them permission to occupy the rooms. They took them and I supposed I had to give them up. The three rooms were on the first floor of the House, a sitting room a bed room and a dining room. The sitting room was used as an office. The dining room with a bed was used by the Quartermaster and the bed room was used by his clerk as a sleeping room and to keep government clothing, &c. These rooms occupied the whole first floor of the House except the hall which they also used.— There was a back kitchen to the House of one story where they ate their meals and which was the only room left to the family down stairs. My family consisted of four persons, in the absence of my husband. Hiram Karns, my daughter Maria of middle age, a boy name Isaac E. Roat 16 years old and myself.

When the Quartermaster took possession he told me he wanted me to board his Clerk which I did as long as he remained there. The Quartermaster boarded for about a week at the camp, sleeping in the house and occupying it during the day and in the evening; after this he told me I must board him also which I did. No price was fixed for board. At the end of three weeks I sent a request to them by Karns for money on board at the rate of five dollars per week. He reported they would pay but three dollars which they did afterwards; but there was no conversation with me at any time about terms; I took what was given me. No payment was ever made for use of house, but only for board and that at the price fixed by themselves as above mentioned. They used two beds which were made up and kept in good order by me.

I had nothing to do with the use of the stables at the barn. My consent to their use of the stables was never asked or given. Any conversation or arrangement on that subject, if it existed, must have been with Mr. Karns.

As to the use of slabs, logs and boards from the saw mill, they were taken without my permission. On the Wednesday before the Friday when the Soldiers left, I saw soldiers with the farm wagon loaded with slabs, and among them some oak slabs which were for our use as firewood. I told them they should not take them as we needed them in the house; I did not care if they took the others; but they must let my firewood be. That was what passed and it was after the appropriation of most of the lumber and other articles from the mill.

I called the attention of the Quartermaster to the digging of our potatoes by the soldiers, and also spoke to the Colonel on the same subject.

I saw a large quantity of straw taken openly from the barn to the camp.

MR. MARY M. COLEMAN,

mark.

COLUMBIA COUNTY, ss:

Before me one of the Justices of the Peace in and for said county personally appeared Mrs. Mary M. Coleman who being duly sworn according to law saith: That the facts set forth in the above statement are just and true and further saith not. Sworn and subscribed before me this 24th day of November, 1864.

SAMUEL RHONE, J. P.

Statement of Hiram Karns.

I was in charge of the Coleman farm while the troops were encamped upon it. I came into the House shortly after the Quartermaster arrived on the Saturday when the troops came, and heard him direct Mrs. Coleman to take furniture out of the sitting room, and I assisted to remove the articles including the Carpet. Colonel Stewart was coming out of the House when I arrived. He said to me that "the old lady was pretty much alarmed, but he thought he would get along with her after awhile." When I went into the House she was crying and said, they calculated to have rooms and two beds. We cleared out the rooms, and then the Quartermaster and I went to the barn. He selected a horse stable to use, and we conversed about the use of Hay. There were several tons of timothy Hay, and he said, every pound used should be paid for. They put horses in the stable and also in the cow-stable. He said, any damage done would be paid for. There

were about four horses there, on an average, during the four weeks the troops remained. During the first week, they fed Coleman's hay for three or four horses, and I then stopped them, as the hay was getting low and needed for Coleman's horses. Afterwards they fed a few times from Coleman's hay when they had none. A ton or more was used. The rack and trough in the cow stable were destroyed, and the horse stable was damaged. No compensation has been made for use of stables, for damages done to them, or for hay used.

There was a large quantity of wheat straw taken from the barn to the camp, for which no permission was ever given. I estimate that two tons of straw were taken. The main amount was taken one day when I was absent. We had just threshed four hundred sheaves of wheat and put the straw in the shed. The whole of this was taken, and nearly all the other straw in the shed and barn. Beside what was taken to camp, a great deal was scattered along the road and wasted.

I spoke to the Quartermaster about this appropriation and waste. He laughed at me and said I ought to stay at home and keep watch. I asked him to pay for it. He said the law did not make provision for the men to draw straw, and he refused to pay. The straw was worth twelve dollars per ton. Hay worth twenty dollars per ton. The barn was used for storing oats for use of the Camp.

I spoke to Quartermaster about pay for the use of the House, the week before he left. Mrs. Coleman desired me to do so. He said, he had nothing to do with paying for the House—he was not to pay for it—the government furnished him quarters, and we must bring it in with the general damage to the place.

When he first came there and afterwards, he said to me and also to Mrs. Coleman, that she should be paid for use of the House, and all that was taken away, and all the damage done.

The flag loaned by Coleman to the troops was taken off by the battery when they left. I demanded it of a Lieutenant of the Battery when leaving, who refused to give it up.

I counted twenty-five stumps of valuable sugar maple trees, cut for use in the Camp. A large number of sugar troughs and three sap or leading troughs, worth five dollars each, were used. Also about five hundred feet sugar camp boards.

The head gear of the race were mostly taken out and used. New ones are necessary, to cost twelve dollars. A stable of Coleman's on his lot next the farm was gutted, the repair of which will cost fifteen dollars.

The use of land for encampment and drill; the injury to fences and crops, and the appropriation of lumber, slabs, potatoes, corn, fruits, tools and fowls, are reasonably and justly stated in Mr. Coleman's communication to Gen. Couch of Oct. 29, 1864, which I have seen. I never gave any consent to use of the articles or property before mentioned, except the stables and hay for which compensation should have been made. I complained a number of times to Col. Stewart and to Captains Lambert and Short, who were successively in command, about injuries done and property taken—about taking slabs and lumber from the mill—the destruction of fences—the pasturing of meadows and use of them for drill—degradations upon the crops—cutting down the sugar camps, &c. Captain Short excused himself to me on the ground that most of the damages were done before he was in command. But a good deal was done while he had control there.

(Signed)

HIRAM KARNS.

COLUMBIA COUNTY, ss:

Hiram Karns being duly sworn according to law saith: that the foregoing statement is just and true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Sworn and subscribed before me, November 24th, 1864.

SAMUEL RHONE, J. P.

Mr. Hulme's Certificate.

I hereby certify that I was appointed one of the men to appraise the damage on Joseph Coleman's property by the soldiers and officers. The appraisers met once but there was no justice to swear as and no witnesses were examined. We looked at the premises and agreed to meet at Esquire Krickbaum's on the following Monday to be sworn and consider the case. I attended on Monday at nine or ten o'clock in the morning, but the others had been there and gone.

Joseph Coleman also attended; said to

me that he had a statement of the particulars of his claim, made out at the instance of the other appraisers. There was no meeting and there has been none since. There has never been to my knowledge any decision in the case, or any report made.

WM. HULME.

November 23, 1864.

Mr. Coleman's Statement.

I am sixty eight years of age; was born in Northampton county and have resided in Columbia county forty years. I own a farm of ninety-six acres whereon I reside, in Fishingcreek township.

I served for three months as a Volunteer, in the service of the United States, near the close of the war of 1812.

I was unlawfully arrested at my home on the morning of 31st. of August 1864 by order of Col Stewart in command of troops then occupying this county, and whose own subsequent military arrest for swindling is notorious. I live soldiers came to my house in the night, at two or three o'clock, remained around or near it for some time and were admitted near daylight on pretence of looking for deserters. I gave my assent that the house should be searched after daylight should come.— When that came they asked for breakfast and while it was preparing Col Stewart came along with a dozen or fifteen soldiers and several citizen prisoners. I was ordered by him to come into the ranks and go along up to Benton Church, as was also my boy, Isaac E. Roat. He refused to wait for us to eat breakfast, saying that we could be back home again in an hour or an hour and a half. I was taken with the other arrested men to Benton Church and kept there until eleven o'clock. The boy Roat was then discharged. We (the prisoners) were then marched to Bloomsburg and taken by way of Northumberland and Harrisburg to Philadelphia where we arrived next day. Had nothing to eat during all this time except some eatables at Benton Church brought in by the neighbors. We were not allowed to get food on the way.

Col Stewart promised me at the church that I might stop at home on the way down for some clothes, but I was not permitted to stop by my guards, although we passed the door of my house. I was in differently clothed at the time and had no change of clothes with me.

We were taken to Fort Mifflin in the afternoon of Sept. 1st, and there placed in confinement in Bomb-proof No. three.— Nearly seven weeks afterwards I was released along with John Yorks and Elias McHenry, on parole to appear when called for by the military authorities, and an oath of allegiance was exacted. No charges against me were ever announced, nor any trial or hearing given me; nor was I ever furnished with any direct information as to the causes of arrest or the reasons for my discharge. I was driven from home as if I had been a beast; thrust into an unhealthy and detestable prison and kept there nearly two months as if I had been one of the vilest of criminals, and then turned loose without explanation or redress. And as the conditions upon which I was to see the enjoyment of my freedom—of which I had been deprived without law and against justice—I was subjected to the indignity of an extra-judicial and unauthorized oath, and to a parole or engagement to hold myself ready to respond to any call, lawful or not, made upon me by military power.

Meantime—during my imprisonment—a military camp was established upon my farm and depredations committed upon my property, for which no compensation has been made, and my house was turned into officer's quarters, free of charge, and my family subjected to official domination. I returned home just seven weeks after the date of my arrest to find my fences swept off, crops destroyed, trees cut down, barn cleaned out, meadows converted into parade grounds, and various articles of personal property appropriated or destroyed. The main particulars of injury are stated in my correspondence with Gen. Couch.

A short time after my second letter to General Couch, dated November 24th, I received verbal notice from Assistant Quartermaster Wood by my son Samuel, that I should meet him at Orangeville to choose men to appraise my damages; that he would choose a man and I choose one, and the two choose a third. Afterwards, I received a written notice from him on the same subject.

I suppose these notices and the project of selecting new appraisers, were in pursuance of some order or direction from General Couch consequent upon my letters

to him. I went to Orangeville and met the Quartermaster at Stewart's store. He asked me if I had got a man to appraise the Camp Damages. I told him no, but I knew where I could get one. He asked me who it was, and I told him William Hulme. He said, "then I must choose a man." I added, "and the two choose a third." He said, "very well." He further said he would let me know when the time was to be, and we parted and I went home.

Mr. Hulme came down to Orangeville the same evening and saw Quartermaster Wood. He informs me that he asked Wood who he had chosen for appraiser: He said, J. Sanderson Woods. He then asked him who was to be the third man and Wood replied he was to be himself. Hulme told him that was not the understanding, the understanding was he was to select one man, I another, and the two a third, and he knew I would not agree to the change. Then he said he must put Sanderson Woods aside and select another; and he named A. B. Stewart (merchant.) But he still insisted upon acting as the third man himself, and said he would come up the next day to hold the appraisal.

Hulme returned home in the night and informed me of this conversation. I told him I would not agree that Quartermaster Wood should be the third man.

The next day the Quartermaster came up and brought Sam Achenbach with him. They passed my house without stopping and went on to Benton, leaving word with Mr. Hulme when they passed his house that they would be back at 11 o'clock to hold the appraisal. They returned after twelve o'clock and saw Mr. Hulme who told them I would not agree to Wood as the third man. Then Wood said we must get other men. Mr. Hulme named four or five men to him. He said he did not know the men—it was getting late in the day—he must go on—and he would return and attend to the business another time. He went off, and that is the last I have heard of Quartermaster Wood. I do not know where he is, nor have I since been favored by his notice in any way whatever.

Before writing to Gen. Couch in October last, Quartermaster Wood told me I could never get any damages—they were not going to give me any. I asked him why. He said because I had been taken prisoner; they were not going to give me anything. He said "see." It was not to be expected in view of this declaration of his, and in view also of his false and unfair report to Gen. Couch upon my case, that I should be foolish enough to submit my claim to his judgment. That would have been, indeed, like submitting the lamb to the nursing care of the wolf.

Having waited several months without any further notice of proceedings in my case, I had three reputable and intelligent men of the neighborhood to view my premises and make appraisal of the damages justly due me. This was in view of my going on to make repairs upon the property, and putting the land under cultivation, as the arrival of spring rendered these things necessary. The appraisers made report as follows:—

"We the undersigned, Appraisers, after due notice all met at the House of Joseph Coleman near Stillwater in Fishing Creek township, on the 23rd day of March, 1865, and after being duly sworn according to law, do assess the damages as follows:—"

(Signed) Samuel Rhone, John O. Dilline, Cyrus B. McHenry.

[Then follows an assessment upon the several items of claim mentioned in my letter to Gen. Couch of 29th October, and upon three small additional ones stated in papers accompanying letter to same of 26th November—amounting in the whole to \$510.70.]

Thus the case stands at present. I have had the facts presented to the General lately in command of "the Department of the Susquehanna," and have disproved the misstatements and answered the arguments (if they can be called such) of his subordinates, Capt. Short and Quartermaster Wood. That answer with the evidence submitted, appears to have induced an order for an appraisal of my damages, but the evident determination of Quartermaster Wood to prevent any fair assessment, has prevented, thus far, any execution of the order. The valuation recently made by Esquire Rhone and Messrs Dilline and McHenry, shows the extent of the claim and confirms the other evidence of its reality and justice.

JOSEPH COLEMAN.

April 8, 1865.